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THE ENGLISH CHURCH

IN THE

EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

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THE

ENGLISH CHURCH

IN THE

EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

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(*J. H. Overton.*)

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Errata

Page 40, line 3 from bottom, *for* 1709 *read* 1790
,, 116, ,, 7 from top, *for* Mrs. Wesley *read* the mother of the Wesleys
,, 320, top line, *for* :— *read* ;
,, 329, bottom line, *for* a board *read* on board
,, 339, line 3 from bottom, *for* Magdalene *read* Magdalen
Chap. V. As an apology for the too numerous errata in this chapter, it may be stated that the writer corrected the sheets when he was away from home, and in some haste to get them ready for the press
Page 413, Note 3 (and elsewhere), *for* Walcot *read* Walcott
,, 415, line 15 from top, *for* antiquarian *read* antiquary
,, 426, ,, 6 from bottom, *for* they *read* it
,, 429, ,, 5 ,, The passage beginning 'Nicholls—' and ending 'hood' should be omitted. The comment quoted does not refer to 1710, but is a translation by Nicholls, published at that date, of a Latin document of Bishop Cosin's time. Before dismissing the passage, it may be observed that Mr. Beresford Hope mentions in a later edition that Nicholls' 'surplice and hood' is a mistranslation from 'superpelliceo et copâ'
,, 430, ,, 7 from top, *for* the possession *read* his possession
,, 435, ,, 6 ,, *after* window *insert* of English make
,, 444, ,, 9 from bottom, *for* prayer *read* prayers
,, 452, ,, 13 from top, *for* Stanley *read* Stukeley
,, 460, top line, *dele* even
,, 463, lines 8 and 9 from bottom, *after* announcements *insert* comma; and *for* 'or . . . . executors,' *read* 'as of meetings at an inn of the executors'
,, 472, line 2 from top, *for* prayer *read* prayers
,, 480, ,, 5 from bottom, *for* Hicks *read* Hickes
,, 497, Note 1 (and in some other places), *for* Nichol's *read* Nichols'
,, 499, ,, 2, *for* Burtson's *read* Wilson's
,, 505, ,, 3, ,, 'A. Andrews' *read* 'C. Andrews'
,, 510, ,, 1, ,, Crutwell *read* Cruttwell
,, 519, line 16 from top, *for* Volden *read* Dolben
,, 526, ,, 6 ,, ,, Farrer, A. S. *read* Farrar, F. W.
,, 535, ,, 6 from bottom *after* ,, *insert* the younger

THE ENGLISH CHURCH

IN THE

EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

CHAPTER I.

CHURCH ABUSES.

NEVER since her Reformation had the Church of England given so fair a promise of a useful and prosperous career as she did at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Everything seemed to be in her favour. In 1702 a sovereign ascended the throne who was enthusiastically devoted to her interests and endeavoured to live according to the spirit of her teaching. The two great political parties were both bidding for her support. Each accused the other of being her enemy, as the worst accusation that could be brought against them. The most effective cry which the Whigs could raise against the Tories was, that they were imperilling the Church by dallying with France and Rome; the most effective cry which the Tories could raise against the Whigs was, that the Church was in danger under an administration which favoured sectaries and heretics.[1] Both parties vehemently

[1] 'We' (Tories), writes Swift (*Examiner*, xxxix.), 'charge them [the Whigs] with a design of destroying the Established Church and introducing fanaticism and free-thinking in its stead. . . . Their clamours against us may be summed up in those three formidable words: Popery, arbitrary power, and the Pretender. Our accusations against them we endeavour to make good by certain overt acts, such as their abusing the whole body of the clergy; their declared contempt for the very order of priesthood; their aversion against episcopacy; the public encouragement and patronage they give to Tindal, Toland, and other atheistical writers;

denied the charge, and represented themselves as the truest friends of the Church. Had they done otherwise they would have forfeited at once the national confidence. For the nation at large, and the lower classes even more than the higher, were vehement partisans of the National Church. The now unusual spectacle of a High Church mob was then not at all unusual.[1] The enemies of the Church seemed to be effectually silenced. Rome had tried her strength against her and had failed—failed in argument and failed in policy. Protestant Dissent was declining in numbers, in influence, and in ability. Both Romanists and Nonconformists would have been only too thankful to have been allowed to enjoy their own opinions in peace, without attempting any aggressive work against the dominant Church.

Sad indeed is the contrast between the promise and the performance. Look at the Church of the eighteenth century in prospect, and a bright scene of uninterrupted triumph might be anticipated. Look at it in retrospect, as it is pictured by many writers of every school of thought, and a dark scene of melancholy failure presents itself. Not that this latter view is altogether a correct one. Many as were the shortcomings of the English Church of this period, her condition was not so bad as it has been represented.

In the early part of the century the Nonjurors not unnaturally regarded with a somewhat jealous eye those who stepped into the places from which they for conscience sake had been excluded, and the accounts which they have left us of the abuses existing in the Church which had turned them adrift must not be accepted without some allowance for the circumstances under which they were written. The Deists, again, taking their stand on the absolute perfection and sufficiency of natural religion, and the consequent needlessness of any further revelation, would obviously strengthen their position if they could show that the ministers of Christianity were, as a matter of fact, faithless and useless. Hence the Church and her ministers were favourite topics for their invectives.

their appearing as professed advocates retained by Dissenters, excusing separation and laying the guilt of it to the obstinacy of the Church; their frequent endeavours to repeal the test,' &c.

[1] In 1705, 1706, 1710, 1711, 1714, 1715, &c. &c. there were High Church mobs.

The reputation of the Church suffered, perhaps, still more from the attacks of the free-livers than from those of the free-thinkers. The strictures of the latter formed part of the great Deistical controversy, and were therefore replied to by the champions of orthodoxy; but the reckless aspersions of the former, not being bound up with any controversy, were for the most part suffered to pass unchallenged. Then, again, the leaders of the Evangelical revival, who were misunderstood, and in many cases cruelly treated, by the clergy of their day, could scarcely help taking the gloomiest possible view of the state of the Church at large, and were hardly in a position to appreciate the really good points of men who were violently prejudiced against themselves; while their biographers in later times have been, perhaps, a little too apt to bring out in stronger relief the brightness of their heroes' portraits by making the background as dark as possible.

Thus various causes have contributed to bring into prominence the abuses of the Church of the eighteenth century, and to throw its merits into the shade.

Still, after making full allowance for the distorting influence of prejudice on many sides, there remains a wide margin which no amount of prejudice can account for. 'Church abuses' must still form a painfully conspicuous feature in any sketch of the ecclesiastical history of the period.

Before entering into the details of these abuses it will be well to specify some of the general causes which tended to paralyse the energies and lower the tone of the Church.

Foremost among these must be placed that very outward prosperity which would seem at the first glance to augur for the Church a useful and prosperous career. But that 'which should have been for her wealth' proved to her 'an occasion of falling.' The peace which she enjoyed made her careless and inactive. The absence of the wholesome stimulus of competition was far from being an unmixed advantage to her. Very soon after the accession of George I., when the voice of Convocation was hushed, a dead calm set in, so far as the internal affairs of the Church were concerned—a calm which was really more perilous to her than the stormy weather in which she had long been sailing. The discussion of great questions

has always a tendency to call forth latent greatness of mind, when any exists. But after the second decade of the eighteenth century there was hardly any great question *within* the Church to agitate men's minds. There was abundance of controversy with those without, but within all was still. There was nothing to encourage self-sacrifice, and self-sacrifice is essential to promote a healthy spiritual life. The Church partook of the general sordidness of the age; it was an age of great material prosperity, but of moral and spiritual poverty, such as hardly finds a parallel in our history. Mercenary motives were too predominant everywhere, in the Church as well as in the State.

The characteristic fault of the period was intensified by the influence of one man. The reigns of the first two Georges might not inaptly be termed the Walpolian period. For though Walpole's fall took place before the period closed, yet the principles he had inculcated and acted upon had taken too deep a root in the heart of the nation to fall with his fall. Walpole had learned the wisdom of applying his favourite maxim, '*Quieta non movere*,' to the affairs of the Church before he began to apply it to those of the State. 'In 1710,' writes his biographer, 'Walpole was appointed one of the managers for the impeachment of Sacheverell, and principally conducted that business in the House of Commons. The mischievous consequences of that trial had a permanent effect on the future conduct of Walpole when head of the Administration. It infused into him an aversion and horror at any interposition in the affairs of the Church, and led him to assume occasionally a line of conduct which appeared to militate against those principles of toleration to which he was naturally inclined.'[1] And so his one idea of managing ecclesiastical affairs was to keep things quiet; he calmed down all opposition to the Church from without, but he conferred a very questionable benefit upon her by this policy.[2]

[1] Coxe's *Memoirs of Sir R. Walpole*, vol. i. pp. 24, 25.

[2] A glaring instance of the blighting effects of the Walpole Ministry upon the Church is to be found in the treatment of Berkeley's attempt to found an university at Bermuda. See a full account of the whole transaction in Wilberforce's *History of the American Church*, ch. iv. pp. 151–160. Mr. Anderson calls it a

If the Church enjoyed outward peace so far as the rivalry of any other Christian body was concerned, if her pre-eminence was unquestioned and her privileges established beyond a cavil, she at the same time enjoyed anything but peace in another direction. The Deistical controversy roused her to put forth her strength in defence of those doctrines which were common to her and all orthodox Dissenters. That she rose to the emergency and did this part of her work most ably and effectually is admitted. But the controversy had its evil effects upon her internal well-being. It diverted bishops from the less pretentious but no less important work of attending to their dioceses, and the clergy from attending to their parishes, to undertake the more exciting task of defending the faith against the attacks of unbelievers; and it gave too controversial a character to many of the sermons—sometimes even to those preached before country congregations.

And if the Church thus suffered in her practical work from the controversies of her own generation, no less did she suffer from the effects left by the controversies of a preceding age. The events which had occurred during the seventeenth century had tended to excite an almost morbid dread of extravagance both in the direction of High Church and Low Church principles—according to the nineteenth, not the eighteenth, century's acceptation of those terms. The majority of the clergy shrank, not unnaturally, from anything which might seem in any degree to assimilate them either to Romanism or to Puritanism. Recent experience had shown the danger of both. The violent reaction against the reign of the Saints continued with more or less force almost to the end of the eighteenth century. The fear of Romanism, which had been brought so near home to the nation in the days of James II., was even yet a present danger, at least during the first half of the century. In casting away everything that seemed

'national crime.' See *History of the Colonial Church*, vol. iii. ch. xxix. p. 437, &c. The Duke of Newcastle pursued the same policy. In spite of the efforts of the most influential Churchmen, such as Gibson, Sherlock, and Secker, who all concurred in recognising the need of clergymen, of churches, of schools, in our plantations, 'the mass of inert resistance presented in the office of the Secretary of State, responsible for the colonies, was too great to be overcome.'—Ibid. p. 443.

to savour of either of these two extremes there was a danger of casting away also much that might have been edifying and elevating. On the one hand, ornate and frequent services and symbolism of all kinds were regarded with suspicion,[1] and consequently infrequent services, and especially infrequent communions, carelessness about the Church fabrics, and bad taste in the work that was done, are conspicuous among the Church abuses of the period. On the other side, fervency and vigour in preaching were regarded with suspicion, as bordering too nearly upon the habits of the hated Puritans of the Commonwealth, and a dry, dull, moralising style of sermon was the result. And, generally, this fear on both sides engendered a certain timidity and obstructiveness and want of elasticity, which prevented the Church from incorporating into her system anything which seemed to diverge one hair's breadth from the groove in which she ran.

Again, the Church was an immense engine of political power. The most able and popular statesmen could not afford to dispense with her aid. The bench of bishops formed so compact a phalanx in the Upper House of the Legislature, and the clergy could and did influence so many elections into the Lower House, that the Church had necessarily to be courted and favoured, often to the great detriment of her spiritual character.

Nor, in touching upon the general causes which impaired the efficiency of the Church during the eighteenth century, must we omit to notice the want of all synodal action. There may be different opinions as to the wisdom or otherwise of the indefinite prorogation of Convocation, as it existed in the early years of the eighteenth century. That it was the scene of unseemly disputes, and altogether a turbulent element in the Constitution, when the Ministry of George I. thought good to

[1] A striking instance is found in the alarm created by Bishop Butler's famous *Durham Charge* (1751). His remark upon 'the neglect of the service of the Church, not only upon common days, but also upon saints' days' was cited as a proof of his attachment to 'the idolatrous communion of Rome, that makes much of saints, saints' days, and all the trumpery of saint worship.' See notes to the Preface by the editor of Butler's *Works* (Bishop Halifax, of Gloucester). On the other hand, it is said that by the High Churchmen Butler was regarded as little better than a Dissenter. See Dr. Doran's *Queens of England of the House of Hanover*, vol. i. p. 400.

prorogue it *sine die* in 1717, is not denied; but that the Church should be deprived of the privilege, which every other religious body enjoyed, of discussing in her own assembly her own affairs, was surely in itself an evil. And we must not too hastily assume that she was not then in a condition to discuss them profitably. The proceedings of the later meetings of Convocation in the eighteenth century which are best known are those which concerned subjects of violent altercation. But these were by no means the only subjects suggested for discussion.[1] The re-establishing and rendering useful the office of rural deans, the regulating of marriage licences, the encouragement of charity schools, the establishment of parochial libraries, the licentiousness of the stage, protests against duelling, the want of sufficient church accommodation, the work of Christian missions both to the heathen and our own plantations—these and other thoroughly practical questions are found among the agenda of Convocation during the eighteenth century; and the mention of them suggests some of the very shortcomings with which the Church of the Hanoverian period is charged.

The causes which led to the unhappy disputes between the Upper and Lower Houses were obviously only temporary; it is surely not chimerical to assume that time and a change of circumstances would have brought about a better understanding between the bishops and the inferior clergy, and that Convocation would have seen better days and have been instrumental in rolling away some at least of the reproaches with which the Church of the day is now loaded.[2] To the action of Convocation in the early part of the eighteenth century the Church was indebted for at least one good work. The building and endowment of the fifty new churches in London would probably never have been effected had not Convocation stirred itself in the matter.[3] There was ample room for similar work, of which every good Christian of every school of thought might have approved. And there were

[1] Bishop Fitzgerald (*Aids to Faith*, Essay ii. § 7) stigmatises the impotency and turbulence of Convocation, but entirely ignores the practical agenda referred to above. See Cardwell's *Synodalia*, on the period.

[2] See the introduction to Palin's *History of the Church of England from the Revolution to the Last Acts of Convocation*.

[3] See Cardwell's *Synodalia*, xlii.

many occasions on which it would appear, *primâ facie*, that synodal deliberation might have proved of immense benefit to the Church. For instance, on that very important, but at the time most perplexing, question, 'How should the Church deal with the irregular but most valuable efforts of the Wesleys and Whitefield and their fellow-labourers?' it would have been most desirable for the clergy to have taken counsel together in their own proper assembly. As it was, the bishops had to deal with this new phase of spiritual life entirely on their own responsibility. They had no opportunity of consulting with their brethren on the bench, or even with the clergy in their dioceses; for not only was the voice of Convocation hushed, but diocesan synods and ruridecanal chapters had also fallen into abeyance. The want of such consultation is conspicuous in the doubt and perplexity which evidently distracted the minds both of the bishops and many of the clergy when they had to face the earlier phenomena of the Methodist movement.

There is yet another element which must be touched upon in noting the general causes of the low estate of the Church of the eighteenth century; it is what Germans would call the *Zeitgeist*, and is well described by a thoughtful writer of the present day. He writes of the England of the period, 'The elimination from public and religious life of the whole element of poetry, of all that softens, elevates, and withdraws human beings from themselves, could not fail to exercise a very injurious influence on the national character, and a still worse influence on the national literature,'[1] and, it may be added, a yet worse influence on the National Church. The eighteenth century was essentially a prosaic age in every department of life—in politics, in philosophy, and in religion. It was the age of 'reason,' the age of 'common sense,' the age of 'experience,' the age of 'enquiry,' but not the age of 'sweetness and light.' As an illustration of the influence of this grovelling tendency let us compare two classes of Churchmen as they were in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries respectively. In both centuries there were what would now be called 'High Churchmen;' but what a contrast

[1] *Fortnightly Review*, December 1869, Pope's 'Essay on Man,' by T. E. Keppel.

there is between those of the later and those of the earlier period. Compare such men as Andrewes and Hammond with such men as Sacheverell and Swift, and the difference will be apparent. To the former, Churchmanship meant a lofty conception of the English as a branch of the great Church Catholic—a spiritual society with which politics had only an accidental and secondary connection. To the latter, the political aspect of High Churchmanship was predominant. The Church, in their view of it, was not so much a spiritual society as a political establishment, whose privileges were to be jealously guarded.[1] Or take, again, the connection between the Church and the reigning monarch. There was what may be termed a court religion of the seventeenth as well as of the eighteenth century. But how different the two! The spirit of the earlier period was a loftier, a more romantic, a less selfish, though possibly a more dangerous spirit than that of the later era. All that is expressed in the once familiar terms 'non-resistance,' 'passive obedience,' 'Divine, hereditary, indefeasible right,' and so forth, was quite alien to the spirit of the eighteenth century.

It will thus be seen that there were many general causes at work which tended to debase the Church during the period which comes under our consideration. No doubt some that have been mentioned were symptoms as well as causes of the disease; but, in so far as they were causes, they must be fully taken into account before we condemn indiscriminately the clergy whose lot it was to live in an age when circumstances were so little conducive to the development of the higher spiritual life, or to the carrying out of the Church's proper mission to the nation. It is extremely difficult for any man to rise above the spirit of his age. He who can do so is a spiritual hero. But it is not given to everyone to reach the heroic standard; and it surely does not follow that because a man cannot be a hero he must therefore be a bad man.

Bearing these cautions in mind, we may now proceed to

[1] In this sense Lord Bolingbroke called himself a High Churchman. 'My next,' he writes to Swift, 'shall be as long as one of Dr. Manton's sermons, who taught my youth to yawn and prepared me to be a High Churchman, that I might never hear him nor read him more.'—Letter quoted in Jesse's *Court of England*, 1688–1760, ii. 89. Bolingbroke would hardly have ventured to write thus to a High Churchman of the old type.

consider some of the more flagrant abuses, the existence of which has affixed a stigma, not altogether undeserved, upon the English Church of the eighteenth century.

One of the worst of these abuses—worst both in itself and also as the fruitful source of many others—was the glaring evil of pluralities and non-residence, an evil which, in spite of occasional protests, existed during the whole of the century, and which attained to such a height that Bishop Horsley, in his charge to the diocese of Rochester in 1800, declared that 'the evil of non-residence was grown to so gigantic a size that a remedy in one way or another could be at no great distance.' The abuse attracted attention at quite an early period in the eighteenth century, and was, in fact, inherited from a still earlier generation. In the conclusion to the 'History of His Own Times,' Bishop Burnet passes some severe but well-deserved strictures on 'the scandalous practices of non-residence and pluralities, which are sheltered by so many colours of law among us.' 'This,' he proceeds, 'is so shameful a profanation of holy things that it ought to be treated with detestation and horror. Do such men think on the vows they made on their ordination, on the rules in the Scriptures, or on the nature of their function, or that it is a cure of souls? How long, how long shall this be the peculiar disgrace of our Church, which, for aught I know, is the only Church in the world that tolerates it?' This was written in 1708, though it was not published until after the writer's death in 1715. Bishop Burnet could utter this protest with a clear conscience; for, whatever his faults may have been, he was scrupulously conscientious in the matter of residing in and attending to the duties of his diocese. He felt so strongly upon these points that when he was appointed preceptor to the young Duke of Gloucester he wished to resign his bishopric, 'thinking the discharge of this duty to be inconsistent with his duties to his diocese; and he accepted the office at last only on the condition that the Prince should reside at Windsor, which was then within the diocese of Salisbury, and that he himself should be allowed ten weeks annually to visit his diocese.'

Unhappily the bishops of the next generation could not remonstrate against the evil with the same good grace,

because the chief offenders were among their own order. It is perfectly astonishing to observe the lax views which even really good men seem to have held on this subject in the middle part of the century. Bishop Newton, the amiable and learned author of the 'Dissertation on the Prophecies,' mentions it as an act of almost Quixotic disinterestedness that 'when he obtained the deanery of St. Paul's (that is, in addition to his bishopric) he resigned his living in the city, having held it for twenty-five years.'[1] In another passage he plaintively enumerates the various preferments he had to resign on taking the bishopric of Bristol. 'He was obliged to give up the prebend of Westminster, the precentorship of York, the lectureship of St. George's, Hanover Square, and the genteel office of sub-almoner.' On another occasion we find him conjuring his friend Bishop Pearce, of Rochester, not to resign the deanery of Westminster. 'He offered and urged all the arguments he could to dissuade the Bishop from his purpose of separating the two preferments, which had been united for near a century, and lay so convenient to each other that neither of them would be of the same value without the other; and if once separated they might perhaps never be united again, and his successors would have reason to reproach and condemn his memory.' In another passage he complains of the diocese of Lincoln being 'so very large and laborious, so very extensive and expensive;' but the moral he draws is, not that it should be subdivided, so that its bishop might be able to perform his duties, but 'that it really requires and deserves a good commendam to support it with any dignity.'

Herring held the deanery of Rochester in commendam with the bishopric of Bangor. Wilcocks was Bishop of Rochester and Dean of Westminster, and was succeeded both in the deanery and the bishopric by Zachary Pearce. Hoadly

[1] *Life of Dr. Thomas Newton, Bishop of Bristol*, by himself. In the same work he gives a curious insight into the ideas of how a bishop should spend his money. 'Bishop Keen succeeded to Ely; and happy it was that he did so, for he merited the appellation of a builder of palaces. He built a new palace at Chester; he built a new Ely House in London, and in great measure a new palace at Ely—left only the outer walls standing, formed a new inside, and thereby converted it into one of the best episcopal houses, if not the very best, in the kingdom.'

held the see of Bangor for six years, apparently without ever seeing the diocese in his life. Even the excellent Dr. Porteus (one of the most pious, liberal, and unselfish of men) thought it no sin to hold a country living in conjunction with the bishopric of Chester. He actually had permission to retain the important living of Lambeth as well; but 'he thought,' says his biographer with conscious pride, 'with so many additional cares he should not be able to attend to so large a benefice, at least to the satisfaction of his own mind, and therefore hesitated not a moment in giving it up into other hands.'[1] Bishop Watson, of Llandaff, gives a most artless account of his non-residence. 'Having,' he tells us, 'no place of residence in my diocese, I turned my attention to the improvement of land. I thought the improvement of a man's fortune by cultivating the earth was the most useful and honourable way of providing for a family. I have now been several years occupied as an improver of land and planter of trees.'[2] The same bishop gives us a most extraordinary description of the sources from whence his clerical income was derived. 'The provision of 2,000*l.* a year,' he says, 'which I possess from the Church arises from the tithes of two churches in Shropshire, two in Leicestershire, two in my diocese, three in Huntingdonshire, on all of which I have resident curates; of five more appropriations to the bishopric, and two more in the Isle of Ely as appropriations to the archdeaconry of Ely.'[3] From a curious letter of George III. to Mr. Pitt in 1787 it would seem that public opinion was at last somewhat outraged by the existence of these evils; the King himself felt strongly the mischief they were doing, but he could only protest ineffectually against their continuance.[4]

[1] Hodgson's 'Life of Beilby Porteus, Bishop of London,' in vol. i. of Porteus's *Works*, p. 45. Another thoroughly good man, Bishop Gibson, was, before he was mitred, Precentor and Residentiary of Chichester, Rector of Lambeth, and Archdeacon of Surrey. See Coxe's *Memoirs of Sir R. Walpole*, i. 478.

[2] *Anecdotes of the Life of R. Watson, Bishop of Llandaff*, published by his son, vol. i. p. 307.

[3] Id. ii. 349.

[4] 'Mr. Pitt,—By your note I find the Bishop of Peterborough declines the deanery of St. Paul's, and this has made you renew your application for Dr. Pretyman. I see you have it so much at heart that I cannot let my reason guide me against my inclination to oblige you. I therefore consent to his having this

Pluralities and non-residence being thus so common among the very men whose special duty it was to prevent them, one can hardly wonder that the evil prevailed to a sad extent among the lower clergy.

Archbishop Secker, in his charge to the diocese of Canterbury in 1758, complains of 'the non-resident clergyman, who reckons it enough that, for aught he knows to the contrary, his parishioners go on like their neighbours,' and attributes to this, among other causes, 'the rise of a new sect, pretending to the strictest piety.' It seems, however, to have been taken for granted that the evil practice must be recognised to a certain extent. Thus Paley, in his charge in 1785, recommends 'the clergy who cannot talk to their parishioners, and non-resident incumbents, to distribute the tracts of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge;'[1] and even so late as 1796 Bishop Horsley admits that 'many non-residents are promoting the general cause of Christianity, and perhaps doing better service than if they confined themselves to the ordinary labours of the ministry.' He thinks it would be 'no less impolitic than harsh to call such to residence,' and adds that 'other considerations make non-residence a thing to be connived at.'[2]

The abuses of non-residence and pluralities naturally gave a great handle to the enemies of the Church. Allusions to them are of constant occurrence in the writings of the so-called free-thinkers; and although, no doubt, they made the very worst of the evil, yet on a matter of fact which anyone could easily disprove, if it were untrue, they would not have ventured to state what was entirely unfounded. Thus

deanery with the bishopric of Lincoln, though I am confident it will be, by all those concerned, thought very unreasonable, and, I should fear, will serve as a precedent to the like applications.'—Earl Stanhope's *Life of Pitt*, vol. i. p. xxi. Appendix. It is refreshing to turn from such accounts to the picture of Bishop Wilson. Queen Caroline was always anxious to promote able and worthy men, and desired to prevail on Wilson to take up his residence in England. 'One day, as he was approaching the Queen to pay his respects to her, she turned round to several bishops who were then at levee, and said, "See here, my Lords, is a bishop who does not come for a translation." "No; and please your Majesty," said the venerable man, "I will not leave my wife in my old age because she is poor."'—Stowell's *Life of Wilson*, p. 222.

[1] Paley's 'Charges,' vol. viii. of his *Works*, in 7 vols.

[2] 'Charge of the Bishop of Rochester,' 1796, Bishop Horsley's *Charges*.

very early in the century we find Toland complaining of 'shepherds who will dispense with the inspection of any flock, or living among their sheep, leaving them always the pastoral name and crook (whereof they seem mighty fond) and duly paying the salary, which, though deserving nothing for their pains, they gladly receive, as a reward, I suppose, of their good intentions, for we seldom see any worthy fruits of their leisure.'[1] Some years later we have Chubb complaining that 'the plurality of benefices, because the profits of one were not sufficient to gratify his avaricious desires, introduced supernumerary clergy, who served as journeymen to do the work for a small stipend, while the appointed guardian of the society lived lazily and idly upon the profits of it. This introduced non-residence, which largely prevails at this day. People might sink or swim; the hireling does no more than the stated duty the law obliges. The clergy don't come near the people from Sunday to Sunday. He just comes to read the service, and when it is done the horse is ready at the hatch to carry him off.'[2] A little later still Whiston asserts that 'the clergy, whether brought up in the Church of England originally or brought over from the Dissenters, will seldom scruple taking as many cures as they can compass or the law of the land with the utmost stretch will allow.'[3] The same writer quotes a letter written to him by a friend in the north in 1730, complaining of 'the offence and scandal given by the shameful non-residence of bishops and their neglect of their dioceses.' For near two years past, adds his correspondent, 'there hath not one bishop appeared among us in all the north part of England. With what grace can non-resident bishops reprove non-resident clergy? Mutual connivance is necessary. The word "incumbent" too frequently loses its name. I could give you instances of rectors who have not, like a certain bishop, set foot on their rectories for six years together, and of another living near me on which there has been neither resident rector nor resident curate for above twelve years.'[4]

The collateral evils which would necessarily result from

[1] Toland on the *Constitution of the Christian Church*, ch. vi.
[2] Chubb's *True Gospel of Jesus Christ Asserted*, § 13.
[3] *Memoirs of Wm. Whiston*, by himself, p. 156.
[4] Letter from John Lawrence to Whiston, Whiston's *Memoirs*, p. 336.

the scandals we are noticing are obvious. When the incumbent of a parish was non-resident, and more especially when, as was not unfrequently the case, there was not even a resident curate, it was impossible that the duties of the parish could be properly attended to. Evidences of this are only too plentiful. But, instead of quoting dreary details to prove a point which has been generally admitted, it will be sufficient in this place to refer to some passages in the charges of a worthy prelate which throw a curious light upon what such a one could reasonably look for in his clergy in the middle of the eighteenth century. In his charge to the diocese of Oxford, in 1741, Bishop Secker recommends the duty of catechising; but he feels that his recommendation cannot in many cases be carried out. 'I am sensible,' he adds, 'that some clergymen are unhappily obliged to serve two churches the same afternoon.' We gather from the same charge a sad idea of the infrequency of the celebration of the Holy Communion. 'One thing,' the Bishop modestly suggests, 'might be done in all your parishes: a Sacrament might easily be interposed in that long interval between Whitsuntide and Christmas. If afterwards you can advance from a quarterly Communion to a monthly, I have no doubt you will.' In the same charge he reminds the clergy that 'our liturgy consists of evening as well as morning prayer, and no inconvenience can arise from attending it, provided persons are within tolerable distance of church. Few have business at that time of day, and amusement ought never to be preferred on the Lord's Day before religion; not to say that there is room for both.'[1] When it is remembered that the state of things indicated in the above remarks existed in the great University diocese, which was presumably in advance of rather than behind the age, and that, moreover, the clergy were presided over by a man who was thoroughly earnest and conscientious, and yet that he can only hint in the most delicate way at improvements which, as the tone of his exhortation evidently shows, he hardly hoped would be carried out, it may be imagined what was the condition of parishes in less favoured and more remote dioceses.

Another evil, which was greatly aggravated by the multi-

[1] Bishop of Oxford's Second Charge, 1741, Secker's *Charges*.

plication of benefices in a single hand, was clerical poverty. There was in the last century a far wider gap between the different classes of the clergy than there is at the present day. While the most eminent or most fortunate among them could take their places on a stand of perfect equality with the highest nobles in the land, the bulk of the country curates and poorer incumbents hardly rose above the rank of the small farmer. A much larger proportion than now lived and died without the slightest prospect of rising above the position of a stipendiary curate; and the regular stipend of a curate was 30*l.* a year.[1] When Collins complained of the expense of maintaining so large a body of clergy, Bentley replied that 'the Parliamentary accounts showed that six thousand of the clergy had, at a middle rate, not 50*l.* a year;' and he then added that argument which was subsequently used with so much effect by Sydney Smith—viz. that 'talent is attracted into the Church by a few great prizes.'[2] Some years later, when Lord Shelburne asked Bishop Watson 'if nothing could be gotten from the Church towards alleviating the burdens of the State,' the Bishop replied that the whole revenue of the Church would not yield 150*l.* a year to each clergyman, and therefore a diminution would be inexpedient, unless Government would be contented to have a beggarly and illiterate clergy, which no wise minister would wish.'[3] He might have added that, even as it was, a great number of the clergy, if not 'beggarly and illiterate,' were either weighed down with the pressure of poverty, or, to escape it, were obliged to have recourse to occupations which were more fit for illiterate men. Dr. Primrose, in his adversity, and Parson Adams are specimens of the better type of this class of clergy, and it is to be feared that Parson Trulliber is not a very unfair specimen of the worst. There is an odd illustration of the immeasurable distance which was supposed to separate the bishop from he curate in Cradock's 'Reminiscences.' Bishop Warburton was to preach in St. Lawrence's Church in behalf of the London Hospital. 'I was,' writes Cradock, 'introduced

[1] Sometimes even lower than this.

[2] Remarks on a *Discourse of Freethinking, by Philelcutherus Lipsiensis*, xl. (edition of 1743).

[3] *Anecdotes of the Life of R. Watson, Bishop of Llandaff*, i. 159.

into the vestry by a friend, where the Lord Mayor and others were waiting for the Duke of York, who was their president; and in the meantime, the bishop did everything in his power to entertain and alleviate their patience. He was beyond measure condescending and courteous, and even graciously handed some biscuits and wine in a salver to the curate who was to read prayers!'[1]

So far as one can judge, this wide gulf which divided the higher from the lower clergy was by no means always a fair measure of their respective merits. The readers of 'Joseph Andrews' will remember that Parson Adams is represented not only as a pious and estimable clergyman, but also as a scholar and a divine. And there were not wanting in real life unbeneficed clergymen who, in point of abilities and erudition, might have held their own with the learned prelates of the period. Thomas Stackhouse, the curate of Finchley, is a remarkable case in point. His 'Compleat Body of Divinity,' and, still more, his 'History of the Bible,' published in 1733, are worthy to stand on the same shelf with the best writings of the bishops in an age when the Bench was extraordinarily fertile in learning and intellectual activity.[2] John Newton wrote most of his works in a country curacy. Romaine, whose learning and abilities none can doubt, was fifty years old before he was beneficed. Seed, a preacher and writer of note, was a curate for the greater part of his life. It must be added, however, that as the eighteenth century advanced, a very decided improvement took place in the circumstances of the bulk of the clergy—an improvement which would have been still more extensive but for the prevalence of pluralities. Lord Macaulay's well-known description of the state of the country clergy at the close of the seventeenth century

[1] Quoted in Kilvert's *Life of Bishop Hurd*, p. 97. Dean Swift, in his *Project for the Advancement of Religion*, speaks of curates in the most contemptuous terms. 'In London, a clergyman, *with one or two sorry curates*, has sometimes the care of above 20,000 souls incumbent on him.'

[2] Still more to the present point is Stackhouse's *Miseries and Great Hardships of the Inferior Clergy in and about London*. He tells us, 'the inferior clergy were objects of extreme wretchedness. They lived in garrets, and appeared in the streets with tattered cassocks. The common fee for a sermon was a shilling and a dinner, for reading prayers twopence and a cup of coffee,' and much more to the same effect.—See Appendix to vol. iii. of Hunt's *Religious Thought in England*, pp. 404, 405.

became, happily, less and less applicable as the years rolled on. The following description, written in 1700, gives us a sad picture of the condition of one class of clergy at that time:—'Some years past there arrived in these parts a little Sir John, who was a Poor Scholar at the University, and went on the errands of several gentlemen of his college, and with the help of that and the college broth made shift to pick up a sorry livelihood. His father kept a blind victual-house, his mother is a renowned ale-wife. He got wherewith to take his B.A. and M.A., and came hither in hopes of a small curacy under a fat parson who had swallowed more livings than he could digest. . . . He died soon after the arrival of our little Dominus vobiscum, who might have died of hunger had not a gentleman of estate and quality took the priest-errant into his house to teach his son Latin, where Sir John did all the spiritual drudgeries of the family, blessed the meat with a good grace, and had the honour of sitting at the lower end of the table, whence (according to his bounden duty) he always very mannerly arose at the serving of the second course, and with a bow as low as to the altar took with him the plate he had ate on. In process of time he skrewed himself into the good graces of Mrs. Abigail, my lady's waiting-woman, and got from his master a living,' &c.—and so on.[1] Much to the same effect is Swift's description of the clergy of about the same period. 'His wife is little better than Goody in her birth, education, or dress; and as to himself, we must let his parentage alone. If he be the son of a farmer it is very sufficient, and his sister may be very decently chambermaid to the squire's wife. He goes about on working days in a grazier's coat, and will not scruple to assist his workmen in harvest time. His daughter shall go to service, or be sent apprentice to the seamstress in the next town, and his sons are put to honest trades. This is the usual course of an English vicar, from 20*l.* to 60*l.* a year.'[2]

Both these portraits may be highly coloured; but there is too much reason to fear that they are not drawn wholly from the imagination. They belong, however, solely to the early

[1] *Mrs. Abigail, a Female Skirmish between the wife of a country squire and the wife of a D.D. . . . with some free thoughts on the quality and dignity of the clergy*, 1700. (Published in a collection of Tracts of the period.)

[2] Swift on the Bill for Clerical Residence.

part of the century. Such pictures at the close of the century would, even as caricatures, have been overdrawn.

Unhappily among the evils resulting from the multiplication of a needy clergy, which may be in part attributed to the undue accumulation of Church property in a few hands, mere penury was not the worst. Some clergy struggled manfully and honestly against its pressure, but others fell into disreputable courses. These latter are not, of course, to be regarded as representative men of any class in the Church. They were simply the Pariahs of ecclesiastical society; the black sheep which will be found, in one form or another, in every age of the Church. But owing to the causes noted above, they formed an exceptionally large class at the close of the seventeenth and during the first half at least of the eighteenth century. One means by which some of them earned a disgraceful livelihood was happily put a stop to by the Marriage Act of 1753. Previously to the passing of that Act, clergymen who were confined for debt in the Fleet Prison were allowed the privilege of marrying couples within its precincts. 'The Grub Street Journal' of February 17, 1735, alludes to the 'ruinous marriages practised in the liberties of the Fleet, &c., by a sett of drunken, swearing parsons that wear black coats.'[1] One Wyatt, according to his own memorandum book, realised 59*l.* 12*s.* 9*d.* in fees in one month. Another, Keith, married one hundred and seventy-three couples in one day, and, according to another authority,[2] six thousand couples in a year.

Others belonging to this class of clergy supported themselves as hangers-on to the families of the great. Domestic chaplains in great houses became less common as the century advanced. The admirable hits of Addison and Steele against the indignities to which domestic chaplains were subjected are more applicable to the early than to the latter part of the century. Boswell adduced it as an instance that 'there was less religion in the nation than formerly,' that 'there used to be a chaplain in every great family, which we do not find now;' and was well answered by Dr. Johnson,[3] 'Neither do you find any of the state servants in great families. There

[1] *The Eighteenth Century*, by A. Andrews.
[2] Lord Mahon's *History of England*, 1713–1783, iv. 26.
[3] Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, in ten vols., 1835, iii. 24.

is a change in customs.' The change, however, was not wholly to the advantage of the Church. Bad as was the relation between the chaplain and his patron, where the former was degraded to an inferior position in the household, there was still some sort of spiritual tie between them.[1] The parson who was simply the boon companion of the ignorant and sensual squire of the Hanoverian period was in a still worse position. This class of clergyman is a constant subject of satire in the lighter literature and caricatures of the day. Not that they were so numerous or so bad as they are often represented to have been. There was a strong and growing tendency in the Georgian era to make the very worst of clerical delinquencies. For it is a curious fact that while the Church as an establishment was most popular, her ministers were most unpopular. Secker complained, not without reason, in 1738, that 'Christianity is now railed at and ridiculed with very little reserve, and the teachers of it without any at all. Against us our adversaries appear to have set themselves to be as bitter as they can—not only beyond all truth, but beyond probability—exaggerating without mercy,' &c.[2] And nearly thirty years later he still makes the same complaint. 'You cannot but see,' he warns candidates for Holy Orders, 'in what a profane and corrupt age this stewardship is committed to you; how grievously religion and its ministers are hated and despised.'[3] 'Since the Lollards,' writes Mr. Pattison, 'there had never been a time when the ministers of religion were held in so much contempt as in the Hanoverian period, or when satire upon Churchmen was so congenial to the general feeling. There was no feeling against the Establishment, nor was nonconformity ever less in favour. The contempt was for the persons, manners, and characters of ecclesiastics.'[4] This unpopularity arose from a complication of causes which need not be investigated in this place; it is sufficient to notice the fact, which should be

[1] How nobly and successfully a domestic chaplain in a great family might do his duty in the eighteenth century, the conduct of Thomas Wilson, when he was domestic chaplain to the Earl of Derby, and tutor to his son, is an instance.—See the *Life of Bishop Wilson*, by the Rev. Hugh Stowell, chap. ii. pp. 20–31.

[2] Bishop of Oxford's *Charge*, 1738.

[3] Secker's *Instructions given to Candidates for Orders*.

[4] Mr. Pattison's Essay in *Essays and Reviews*.

thoroughly borne in mind in estimating the value to be attached to contemporary complaints of clerical misdoings.

The evils resulting from pluralities and non-residence would have been mischievous under any circumstances; but their mischief was still further enhanced by the false principles upon which ecclesiastical patronage was too often distributed.[1] Statesmen who valued religion chiefly as a State engine had an eye merely to political ends in the distribution of Church preferment. This is of course a danger to which an Established Church is peculiarly liable at all times; but the critical circumstances of the eighteenth century rendered the temptation of using the Church simply for State purposes especially strong. The memorable results of the Sacheverell impeachment, which contributed so largely to bring about the downfall of the Whig Ministry in 1710, showed how dangerous it was for statesmen to set themselves against the strong feeling of the majority of the clergy. The life-long effects

[1] A sad illustration of the sort of motives which were supposed to influence the clergy and their patrons is found in the life of Charles Churchill the poet. Speaking of the time when Churchill had written many of his satires, and when he was known to be the intimate friend of Wilkes, and to have taken part in the Medmenham orgies, Dr. Kippis writes, 'His most intimate friends thought his laying aside the external decorums of his profession, a blameable opposition to the decencies of life, and likely to be hurtful to his interests; since the abilities he was possessed of, and the figure he made in political contests, would perhaps have recommended him to some noble patron, from whom he might have received a valuable benefice.' Churchill, however, knew himself better. Perhaps the saddest verses that ever were written were those in which he describes his false position as a clergyman.

'Much did I wish, e'en whilst I kept those sheep
Which, for my curse, I was ordain'd to keep,
Ordain'd, alas! to keep thro' need, not choice,
Those sheep which never heard their shepherd's voice,
Which did not know, yet would not learn their way,
Which stray'd themselves, yet griev'd that I should stray.
. . . . . .
Whilst, sacred dulness ever in my view,
Sleep at my bidding crept from pew to pew.'

What Churchill's friends suggested seriously, his enemies suggested ironically.

'Thy sacred brethren too (for they no less
Than laymen bring their offerings to success)
Had hail'd thee good if great and paid the vow
Sincere as that they pay to God, whilst thou
In lawn hadst whispered to a sleeping crowd
As dull as Rochester, and half as proud.

See Foster's *Historical and Biographical Essays*, Charles Churchill.

which this famous trial produced upon Sir R. Walpole have already been noticed. Both he and his timid successor prided themselves upon being friends of the Church, and expected the Church to be friends to them in return. Neither of them made any secret of the fact that they regarded Church preferment as a useful means of strengthening their own power. Nor were these isolated cases. 'Lord Hardwicke' (his biographer tells us) 'thought it his duty to dispose of the ecclesiastical preferments in his gift [as Chancellor] with a view to increase his own political influence, without any scrupulous regard for the interests of religion and without the slightest respect for scientific or literary merit.'[1] Lord Shelburne gave the bishopric of Llandaff to Dr. Watson, 'hoping,' the Bishop tells us, 'I was a warm, and might become a useful partisan, and he told the Duke of Grafton he hoped I might occasionally write a pamphlet for their administration.'[2] Warburton complains with characteristic roughness of 'the Church being bestrid by some lumpish minister.'[3] Even Dr. Johnson, that stout defender of the Established Church, and of everything connected with the administration of its affairs, was obliged to own that 'no man can now be made a bishop for his learning and piety; his only chance of promotion is his being connected with some one who has parliamentary interest.'[4] He seems, however, to think the system inevitable and justifiable, owing to the weakness of the Government, for he prefaces his admission by remarking that 'all that Government, which has now too little power, has to bestow, must be given to support itself; it cannot reward merit.' Mr. Grenville's well-known remark to Bishop Newton,[5] that he considered bishoprics of two sorts, either as bishoprics of business or bishoprics of ease, is another instance of the low views which statesmen took, and were not ashamed to avow, of their responsibilities as dispensers of Church preferment.

[1] *Lives of the Chancellors*, by Lord Campbell, vol. v. chap. xxxviii. p. 186.

[2] *Anecdotes of the Life of R. Watson, Bishop of Llandaff*, published by his son, vol. i., p. 157.

[3] *Letters from Warburton to Hurd*, second ed. 1809, Letter xlvii. July, 1752.

[4] Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, in ten vols., 1835, Murray, vol. v. p. 298. See also vol. iv. p. 92. 'Few bishops are now made for their learning. To be a bishop, a man must be learned in a learned age, factious in a factious age, but always of eminence,' &c.

[5] See Bishop Newton's *Autobiography*, and Lord Mahon's *History*.

Such a system naturally tended to foster a false estimate of their duties on the part of those who were promoted. If the dispenser of Church preferment was too apt to regard merely political ends, the recipient or expectant was on his part too often ready to play the courtier or to become the mere political partisan. Whiston complains that 'the bishops of his day were too well known to be tools of the Court to merit better bishoprics by voting as directed.'[1] Warburton owns that 'the general body of the clergy have been and (he is afraid) always will be very intent upon pushing their temporal fortunes.'[2] Watson considered 'the acquisition of a bishopric as no proof of personal merit, inasmuch as they are often given to the flattering dependants and unlearned younger branches of noble families.' Nay, further, he considered 'the possession of a bishopric as a frequent occasion of personal demerit.' 'For,' he writes, 'I saw the generality of bishops bartering their independence and dignity of their order for the chance of a translation, and polluting Gospel humility by the pride of prelacy.'[3] Lord Campbell informs us that 'in spite of Lord Thurlow's living openly with a mistress, his house was not only frequented by his brother the bishop, but by ecclesiastics of all degrees, who celebrated the orthodoxy of the head of the law and his love of the Established Church.'[4] If one might trust two memoir writers who had better opportunities of acquiring correct information than almost any of their contemporaries, inasmuch as one was the son of the all-powerful minister, and the other was the intimate friend and confidential adviser of the chief dispenser of

[1] *Memoirs of William Whiston*, by himself, p. 275. See also pp. 119 and 155, 156.

[2] 'A fact,' he adds, 'so apparent to government, both civil and ecclesiastical, that they have found it necessary to provide rewards and honours for such advances in learning and piety as may best enable the clergy to serve the interests of the Church of Christ,' a remark which we might have thought ironical did we not know the temper of the times.—See Watson's *Life of Warburton*, 488.

[3] *Anecdotes of the Life of Bishop Watson*, i. 116. He quotes also a remark of D'Alembert: 'The highest offices in Church and State resemble a pyramid, whose top is accessible to only two sorts of animals, eagles and reptiles.'

[4] *Lives of the Chancellors*, vol. v. chap. clxi. p. 656. Lord Chesterfield makes some bitter remarks on the higher clergy 'with the most indefatigable industry and insatiable greediness, darkening in clouds the levees of kings and ministers,' &c., quoted in Phillimore's *History of England*, during the reign of

ecclesiastical patronage, the sycophancy and worldliness of the clergy about the Court in the middle of the eighteenth century must have been flagrant indeed. The writers referred to are, of course, Horace Walpole and John, Lord Hervey. Both of them, however, are so evidently actuated by a bitter animus against the Church that their statements can by no means be relied upon as authentic history. Horace Walpole's aspersions of the clergy bear upon the face of them the marks of prejudice, and confute themselves. In more instances than one, his facts have been fully disproved,[1] and the deductions which he draws from other facts which are not denied are so obviously unfair that they deprive his evidence on this point of all value. Lord Hervey (Pope's 'Sporus' and 'Lord Fanny') writes on every subject in the spirit of a man who 'had a morbid view of mankind, and little of the milk of human kindness in his temper;' but on no subject does he show himself so warped by his sour and cynical spirit as on those connected with the Church. As Mr. Croker remarks in his biographical notice, 'he had a peculiar antipathy to the Church and Churchmen.'[2] Even as caricatures, the portraits drawn by these clever and amusing but unscrupulous men are, from an artistic point of view, overdrawn; those who form their estimate of the dignitaries of the Church of England from their memoirs will be grievously misled. There was no need of exaggeration or misrepresentation. The real state of the case was quite bad enough. We need not have recourse to seceders like Whiston, or disappointed men like Watson, or cynical courtiers like Hervey and Chesterfield, or reckless retailers of gossip like Walpole; we have but

George III. Phillimore himself makes some very severe strictures on the sycophancy and greed of the higher clergy.—See his *History, passim.*

[1] His accounts of Secker, Blackburne, Gilbert, &c., are, on the face of them, outrageous.—See H. Walpole's *Memoirs of the Reign of King George II.*, vol. i. chap. 3, &c. 'I can never forget,' says the biographer of Bishop Beilby Porteus, 'the surprise and indignation excited in Porteus' mind on reading two passages in the late Lord Orford's works, in one of which the point of an epigram is made to turn upon the supposition that Archbishop Secker was a hypocrite, and in the other he is expressly charged with having been president of an Atheistical Club.'—*Life of Beilby Porteus, Bishop of London*, by Hodgson, appended to vol i. of Porteus' *Works.*

[2] See Lord Hervey's *Memoirs of the Reign of George II.*, Croker's edition, vol. i. Biog. Notice, xxv.

to turn to the confessions of the men themselves to find only too many indications of an inordinate love of preferment and of subserviency to a corrupt Court prevalent among the higher clergy. Take, for example, Lady Sundon's correspondence. During the reign of George II., Queen Caroline was, up to the time of her death, the chief distributor of ecclesiastical patronage. In the courtly language of the Duchess of Somerset, 'she made all the clergy of England happy by taking them under her immediate protection.' Access to the Queen could only be had, as a rule, through the medium of the mistress of her robes, Mrs. Clayton, afterwards Lady Sundon. The publication of this lady's correspondence reveals a sad spirit of subserviency and worldliness on the part of many of her clerical correspondents. Of course, too much weight must not be given to revelations made under such circumstances. In any time or country, the publication of the secret records of applications for patronage would exhibit a more than just proportion of the meanest part of human nature. The letters published in this correspondence were not intended to meet the public eye, and cannot fairly be expected to sustain so severe a scrutiny; but still, after making full allowance for this consideration, the impartial reader will admit that they confirm, by the evidence of the aspirants after preferment themselves, the impression which is derived from many other sources, that an inordinate yearning for advancement and undue obsequiousness to those who had the power of conferring it, were conspicuous among the Church abuses of the eighteenth century.

Or take another kind of evidence. Several of the Church dignitaries of the eighteenth century have been obliging enough to leave autobiographies to posterity, so that we can judge of their characters as drawn, not by the prejudiced or imperfect information of others, but by those who ought to know them best—themselves. One of the most popular of these autobiographies is that of Bishop Newton. A great part of his amusing memoirs is taken up with descriptions of the methods which he and his friends adopted to secure preferment. There is very little, if anything, in them of the duties and responsibilities of the episcopal office. Where will they be most comfortable? What are their chances of further

preferment? How shall they best please the Court and the ministers in office? These are the questions which Bishop Newton and his brother prelates, to whom he makes frequent but never ill-natured allusions, are represented as constantly asking in effect. Curious indeed are the glimpses which the Bishop gives us into the system of Church patronage and the race for preferment which were prevalent in his day. But more curious still is the impression which the memoirs convey that the writer himself had not the faintest conception that there was anything in the least degree unseemly in what he relates. There appears to be a sort of moral obtuseness in him in reference to these subjects, but to these subjects only.[1] The memoir closes with a beautiful expression of resignation to the Divine Will, and of hopeful confidence about the future, in which he was no doubt perfectly sincere. And yet he openly avows a laxity of principle in the matter of preferment-seeking and Court-subservience which taken by itself would argue a very worldly mind. How are we to reconcile the apparent discrepancy? The most charitable as well as the most reasonable explanation is that the good Bishop's faults were simply the faults of his age and of his class. And for this very reason the autobiography is all the more valuable as an illustration of the subject before us. Bishop Newton is eminently a representative man. His memoir contains evidently not the exceptional sentiments of one who was either in advance of or behind his age, but reflects a faithful picture of a general attitude of mind very prevalent among Church dignitaries of that date.

Bishop Watson's 'Anecdotes of his own Life' furnish another curious illustration of the sentiments of the age on the matter of Church preferment. But the Bishop of Llandaff treats the matter from an entirely different point of view from that of the Bishop of Bristol. The latter was perfectly content with his own position and with the preferment before him of his brother clergy. 'He was rather pleased with his little bishopric.' 'His income was amply sufficient, and scarce any bishop had two more comfortable or convenient

[1] The Life gives us the impression that he was a firm believer, that he strove to live a Christian life, that he was very amiable, and that he was quite free from the paltry vice of jealousy at another's good fortune.

houses. Greater he might have been, but he could not have been happier; and by the good blessing of God was enabled to make a competent provision for those who were to come after him, as well as to bestow something on charity.'[1] Bishop Watson writes in a very different strain. His 'Anecdotes' are full of the bitterest complaints of the neglect he had met with. He is 'abandoned by his friends, and proscribed the emoluments of his profession.' He is 'exhibited to the world as a marked man fallen under royal displeasure.' He appeals to posterity in the most pathetic terms. 'Reader!' he exclaims, 'when this meets your eye, the author of it will be rotting in his grave, insensible alike to censure and to praise; but he begs to be forgiven this apparently self-commendation. It has not sprung from vanity, but from anxiety for his reputation, lest the disfavour of a Court should by some be considered as an indication of general disesteem or a proof of professional demerit.' And yet, by his own confession, Bishop Watson had a clerical income from his bishopric and professorship of divinity at Cambridge of 2,000*l.* a year; in return for which, the work he did in either of these capacities was, from his own showing, really next to nothing. In fact, in many respects he seems to have been an exceptionally lucky man. He was appointed to two professorships at Cambridge when by his own confession he was totally unqualified for performing the duties of either. In 1764, when he was only twenty-seven years of age, he 'was unanimously elected by the Senate assembled in full congregation, Professor of Chemistry.' 'At the time this honour was conferred upon me,' he tells us with charming frankness, 'I knew nothing at all of chemistry, had never read a syllable on the subject, nor seen a single experiment in it; but I was tired with mathematics and natural philosophy, and the *vehementissima gloriæ cupido* stimulated me to try my strength in a new pursuit, and the kindness of the University (it was always kind to me) animated me to very extraordinary exertions.' A few years later, the University was kinder still. At the early age of thirty-four he was appointed 'to the first office for honour in the University, the Regius Professorship of Divinity.' Then, with the same delightful naïveté he tells us, 'On being raised

[1] *Memoirs of Bishop Newton*, by himself.

to this distinguished office, I immediately applied myself with great eagerness to the study of divinity.' One would have thought that his theological studies should have commenced before he undertook the duties of a divinity professorship. But happily for him his ideas of what would qualify him to be a theologian were on the most limited scale. 'I determined to study nothing but my Bible, being much unconcerned about the opinions of councils, fathers, churches, bishops, and other men as little inspired as myself.' If troublesome people wanted to argue on theological questions with the Regius Professor of Divinity, 'I never,' he tells us, 'troubled myself with answering their arguments, but used on such occasions to say to them, holding the New Testament in my hand, "*En sacrum codicem.*"' This was a simple plan, and it must be confessed, under the circumstances, a very convenient and prudent one, but it scarcely justified the strong claims for preferment which the Bishop constantly founded upon it, as if he had rendered an almost priceless service to religion. The compendious method of silencing a gainsayer or satisfying an anxious inquirer by flourishing a New Testament in his face, and crying '*En sacrum codicem*,' seems hardly likely to have been very effective. For the first few years of his professorship he attended to its duties personally, after the fashion that has been described; but for the greater part of the long time during which he held that office he employed a deputy. When he was appointed to the bishopric of Llandaff he found there was no residence for him in his diocese, and he does not seem to have particularly cared about having one. He was content with paying it an occasional visit at very rare intervals, and settled himself in comfortable quarters 'in the beautiful district on the banks of Winandermere.' Here he employed his time 'not,' he proudly tells us, 'in field diversions and visiting. No! it has been spent partly in supporting the religion and constitutions of my country, by seasonable publications, and principally in building farm-houses, blasting rocks, enclosing wastes, making bad land good, planting larches, &c. By such occupations I have recovered my health, preserved my independence, set an example of a spirited husbandry, and honourably provided for my family.'

If we formed our estimate of Bishop Watson's character simply from such samples as these, we might conclude that he was a covetous, unreasonably discontented, and worldly-minded man. But this would be a very unfair conclusion to arrive at. The Bishop gives us only one, and that the weakest side of his character. He was most highly esteemed by some of his contemporaries whose good opinion was well worth having. Gibbon pays him a very high compliment, calling him 'his most candid as well as able antagonist.' Wilberforce wrote to him in 1800 saying that 'he hoped ere now to be able to congratulate him on a change of situation which in public justice ought to have taken place.' In 1797, Hayley wrote to him (saying it was Lord Thurlow's expression), 'Your writings have done more for Christianity than all the bench of bishops put together.'[1] Lord Campden told Pitt that 'it was a shame for him and the Church that he had not the most exalted station upon the Bench.' As in the case of Bishop Newton, one can only reconcile these anomalies by bearing fully in mind the low views which were commonly taken of clerical responsibilities, and the general scramble for the emoluments of the Church which was not thought unseemly in the eighteenth century.

One of the most characteristic specimens of the courtier prelate of the eighteenth century on whom so much abuse has been somewhat unfairly lavished both by contemporaries and by writers of our own time, who have dwelt exclusively upon the weak side of their character, was Bishop Hurd. Hurd is now chiefly known as the devoted friend—or rather the '*fidus Achates*'—of Warburton. He was a man, however, who had a very distinct individuality of his own, and may be regarded as a fair representative of a type of bishop now extinct. He was more distinguished as a scholar than as a divine, and more perhaps as a courtier than either the one or the other. When, however, it is said that Hurd was a courtier, it is not meant to imply that he was servile or in any way unduly complaisant to the King or the Court. There is no

[1] Bishop Watson was a decidedly able writer, and he never allowed himself to be the tool of any party. He says of himself with perfect truth, 'I have hitherto followed and shall continue to follow my own judgment in all public transactions.'

evidence of anything of the sort. Neither does he appear to have been, like some of his contemporaries, unduly intent upon advancing his own selfish interests. His preferments came apparently unsought, and he refused the Primacy, although it was pressed upon him by the King on the death of Archbishop Cornwallis in 1783. Although he rose from a comparatively humble origin, 'his parents,' he tells us, 'were plain, honest and good people' (his father was, in fact, a farmer); he seems to have been gifted by nature with great courtliness of manner, and with aristocratic tastes. On his first introduction at Court he won by these graces the heart of the King, who remarked that he thought him more naturally polite than any man he had ever met with. Hurd subsequently became the most trusted friend and constant adviser of George III. There is a very touching letter extant, which the King wrote to Hurd in one of his great sorrows, expressing most feelingly the value in which George held the religious ministrations of his favourite bishop, and the high opinion he had of his piety and worth. The mere fact that Hurd won the affectionate respect—one might almost say veneration—of so good a Christian as King George, furnishes a presumption that he must have been a man of some merit; and there is nothing whatever in any of his writings, or in anything we hear of his life, that should lead us to think otherwise. Nevertheless, it was just such men as Hurd which tended to keep the Church of the eighteenth century, in its apathetic state. Hurd was a religious-minded man; but his religion was characterised by a cold, prim propriety which was not calculated to commend it to men at large. Like his friend Warburton, he could see nothing but folly and fanatical madness in the great evangelical revival which was going on around him, and which he seems to have thought would soon be stamped out. He only emerged from his stately seclusion on great occasions; but when he did go forth, he was surrounded with all 'the pomp and circumstance' which might impress beholders with a sense of his dignity. 'Hartlebury Church is not above a quarter of a mile from Hartlebury Castle, and yet that quarter of a mile Hurd always travelled in his episcopal coach, with his servants in full-dress liveries; and when he used to go from Worcester to Bristol Hot Wells, he never moved with-

out a train of twelve servants.' Hurd has left us a very short memoir of his own life; but short as the memoir is, it gives us a curious insight into one side of his character. The whole account is compressed into twenty-six pages, and consists for the most part merely of a bare recital of the chief events of his life. But one day—one memorable day to be marked with the whitest of white chalk—is described at full length. Out of the twenty-six pages, no less than six are devoted to the description of a visit with which the King honoured him at Hartlebury, when 'no accident,' we are glad to learn, 'of any kind interrupted the mutual satisfaction which was given and received on the occasion.'

It has been already observed that the Church interest formed a most important element in the reckoning of statesmen of this century; and the extent to which the clergy were mixed up with the politics of the day must, under the circumstances, be reckoned among the Church abuses of the period. Not, of course, that this is in itself an evil. On the contrary, it would be distinctly a misfortune, both to the State and to the Church, if the clergy of a Church constituted like our own were to abstain altogether from taking any part in politics. It could hardly fail to be a loss to the State if a large and presumably intelligent class stood entirely aloof from its affairs. And the clergy themselves by so doing would be both forfeiting a right and neglecting a duty. As citizens who have an equal stake with the laity in the interests of the country, they clearly enjoy the right to have a voice in the conduct of its affairs. And as Christians they have a positive duty incumbent upon them to use the influence they possess in this, as in every other relation of life, for the cause of Christianity. But with this right and this duty there is also a danger lest those, whose chief concern ought to be with higher objects, should become overmuch entangled with the affairs of this life; and a danger also lest men whose training is, as a rule, not adapted to make them good men of business, should throw their influence into the wrong scale. In so far, but only in so far as the clergy fell into one or the other of these snares, can the political churchmanship of the eighteenth century be classed among the Church abuses of the period. The circumstances of the times increased these dangers.

During the reigns of the first two Georges political morality was at so low an ebb that it was difficult for the clergy to take a leading part in politics without injury to their spiritual character. They could hardly touch the pitch without being defiled. It is to be feared that politics at this period did more to debase the clergy than the clergy did to elevate politics. Not but that they often incurred an unpopularity for the part they took in political questions which was wholly undeserved. Nothing, for example, brought more odium upon the bishops than the share they had in throwing out the Quakers' Tithes Bill in 1736. Yet apparently without just cause; for a high legal authority of our own day, who certainly shows no prejudice in favour of the Church and her ministers, characterises this measure as a well-meant but impracticable bill. Again, in 1753, many of the bishops were exposed to unmerited abuse for supporting, as they were clearly right in doing, the Jews' Naturalisation Bill.[1] Again, in 1780, the bishops had the good sense not to be led astray by the senseless 'No Popery' cry, which led to the Gordon riots; and by their moral courage on this occasion they drew down upon themselves much undeserved censure. The good sense, however, which characterised the political conduct of the clergy on these and other occasions was, unfortunately, exceptional. As a rule, the political influence of the clergy was not very wisely exercised. Notably, in two of the most critical situations during the century, the weight of clerical authority was thrown into what all but the most extreme partisans will now own to have been the wrong scale. The first was that series of events which led to and which attended the Peace of Utrecht. It would be very unfair to suppose that the clergy were fully aware of the extreme danger in which the nation was all but involved during the administration of Harley and Bolingbroke. But the fact remains that it was a most perilous crisis, and that the clergy as a body had no small share in bringing it about. The second was, if not more perilous in its tendency, yet far more disastrous in its results. There are few who do not now deplore the conduct of King George the Third and his

[1] See Lord Mahon's *History*, vol. vi. where a passage is quoted from the 'London Courant' of June 3, 1780.

Ministry in reference to the unhappy disputes with our American colonies. The vast majority of the clergy shared the King's most unfortunate prejudices, and contributed in no slight degree to the carrying out of his policy. Again were heard from the pulpits arguments and declamations which belonged to a past generation. The duty of passive obedience and the guilt of resisting the Lord's anointed were inculcated and applied to the case of the revolting colonists. The Americans were assailed on scriptural grounds; their rebellion was compared with the sin of witchcraft. Franklin was likened to Achitophel, Washington to Jeroboam. The result of the elections in 1774, which gave an immense majority for Lord North, was greatly owing to the exertions of the clergy. Every measure for war was supported by the Bench. 'Twenty-four bishops,' wrote Franklin bitterly, 'with all the lords in possession or expectation of places, make a dead majority which renders all debating ridiculous.'

It would be wrong to attribute solely or even chiefly to clerical influence the various instances of an intolerant spirit which displayed itself in the legislation of the period; such, for instance, as was shown in the iniquitous Schism Bill of 1714, and in the abortiveness of the various attempts to get rid of the Test and Corporation Acts; but it is to be feared that the clergy (with many honourable exceptions, especially among the bishops) fomented this spirit. Swift expressed the sentiments of many, if not the majority, of his order, when he wrote in 1714:—'There are two points of the highest importance wherein a very great majority of the kingdom appear perfectly hearty and unanimous: (1) that the Church of England should be preserved entire in all her rights, powers, and privileges; all doctrines relating to government discouraged which she condemns; all schisms, sects, and heresies discountenanced and kept under due subjection, as far as consists with the lenity of our constitution; her open enemies (among whom I include, at least, Dissenters of all denominations) not trusted with the smallest degree of civil or military power; and her secret adversaries, under the names of Whigs, Low Church republicans, moderation men, and the like, receive no marks of favour from the Crown but what

they should deserve by a sincere repentance.'[1] A year or two after the period here described, Addison, in his admirable sketch of the landlord of the inn who 'had swelled his body to a prodigious size, and worked up his complexion to a standing crimson by his zeal for the prosperity of the Church,' and who 'had not time to go to church himself, but had headed a mob at the pulling down of two or three meeting-houses,' adds, 'I found he had learned a great deal of politics, but not one word of religion from the parson of his parish; and had scarce any other notion of religion but that it consisted in hating Presbyterians. He enlarged on the happiness of the neighbouring shire, for there is scarce a Presbyterian in the whole county except the bishop.'[2] Addison is here writing avowedly as a strong political partisan, and his description must therefore not be taken quite literally; but he undoubtedly points to a real evil which the political vehemence of many of the clergy was encouraging.[3] The keen interest which the clergy took in politics, especially such as were supposed to affect the Church, sometimes led them to forget their sacred characters and to connive at, if not sanction, the immoralities of men who atoned for their irregularities by defending the temporalities of the Church. 'The sanctity of the Sabbath,' writes a foreigner, 'and the dogmas of the Anglican Church, were most zealously defended by the Duke of Grafton, the Earls of Bradford and Sandwich, Lords Thurlow, Barrington, and Weymouth, who yet did not refrain from celebrating orgies at which even the most holy things were ridiculed in the most scandalous manner.'[4]

It would have been well if the clergy had, as a rule, been as active and earnest in their proper work as many of them were in political business. But, with many honourable exceptions, they showed a sad apathy in the performance of their clerical functions. Except in the closing years of the century, when the evangelical revival had made itself felt even in quarters where it was most bitterly opposed, the

[1] *Free Thoughts on the Present State of Affairs* (1714).

[2] *Freeholder*, No. 22 for March 5, 1716–17.

[3] See also Bishop of Oxford's Fifth Charge, 1753.

[4] Schlosser's *History of the Eighteenth Century*, translated by D. Davison, vol. ii. § 4. See also Jesse's *Memoirs of the Life and Reign of King George III.*, vol. ii. p. 239.

descriptions of Bishop Burnet and of Horace Walpole seem to have been generally applicable. 'Above all things,' writes Burnet to the clergy in the conclusion to the 'History of His Own Times,' 'raise within yourselves a zeal for doing good and for saving souls; indeed, I have lamented, during my whole life, that I saw so little true zeal among our clergy. I saw much of it among the clergy of the Church of Rome, though it is both ill-directed and ill-conducted. I saw much zeal likewise throughout the foreign churches. The Dissenters have a great deal among them; but I must own that the main body of our clergy has always appeared dead and lifeless to me; and instead of animating one another they seem rather to lay one another to sleep. Without a visible alteration in this,' he adds, forecasting what was, alas! only too faithfully fulfilled, 'you will fall under an universal contempt, and lose both the credit and fruits of your ministry.' And still more strongly, 'I say it with regret, I have observed the clergy in all the places through which I have travelled, Papists, Lutherans, Calvinists, and Dissenters; but of them all our clergy is much the most remiss in their labours in private and the least severe in their lives.'

Matters grew worse rather than better in the generation which succeeded Burnet. In his summary of the period which closed with the death of George II., Horace Walpole writes:—'The Church was moderate and, when the Ministry required it, yielding.' From the point of view of this writer, whose sentiments on religious matters exactly corresponded with those of his father, nothing could have been more satisfactory than this state of things. To those who look upon the Church merely as a State Establishment, 'moderate, and, when the Ministry require it, yielding,' would represent its ideal condition. But to those who believe in it as part of a great divine Institution, the picture will convey a different impression. They will see in it a worldly man's description of the spiritual lethargy which had overtaken English Christendom. The expression will not be deemed too strong when it is remembered what was, as a matter of fact, the real state of affairs so far as the practical work of the Church was concerned. Under the very different conditions under which we live, it is difficult to realise what existed or rather what

did not exist in the last century. What would now be considered the most ordinary part of parochial machinery was then wanting. The Sunday school which was first set on foot about the middle of this century[1] was regarded with suspicion by many of the clergy, and vehemently opposed by some. The interest in foreign missions which had been awakened at the beginning of the century was not sustained. The population of the country had far outgrown the resources of the National Church, even if her ministers had been as energetic as they were generally the reverse, and there were no voluntary societies for home missions to supply the defects of the parochial machinery. The labouring classes were grievously neglected. House-to-house visiting was the exception, not the rule, on the part of the clergy. The good old plan of catechising not only children but domestic servants and apprentices on Sunday afternoons had fallen into disuse.[2] In the early part of the century plans had been set on foot for the establishment of parochial libraries, but these had fallen through. In short, beyond the personal influence which a clergyman might exercise over his friends and dependents in his parish (which was often very wholesome and also very extensive), his clerical work consisted solely in reading the services and preaching on Sundays. When Boswell

[1] Raikes established the first of his Sunday schools in 1781, but it is certain that one was established before this by Hannah Ball at High Wycombe in 1769, and it is probable that there were also others. Mr. Buckle says they were established by Lindsay, in or immediately after 1765.—(*History of Civilization*, i. 302, note). However to Raikes belongs the credit of bringing the institution prominently before the public. It may be noticed that Raikes was a decided Churchman. His son contradicts almost indignantly the notion which became prevalent that he was a Dissenter. One of the rules of Raikes' Gloucester Sunday School was that the scholars should attend the Cathedral service. There was a strong prejudice against Sunday schools among some of the clergy, but it was combated by others. Paley, in one of his Charges, tried to disabuse his clergy of this prejudice, and so did several other dignitaries. But Bishop Horsley, in his Charge at Rochester, made some severe remarks against Sunday schools.—See *Life of R. Hill*, p. 428. The evangelical clergy, of course, warmly took up the Sunday school scheme. In this, as in many other cases, the Church was responsible for the remedy as well as the abuse.

[2] Bishop Wilson made vigorous and successful efforts in the Isle of Man to revive the system of catechising in church; and strongly urged every 'rector, vicar, and curate to spend, if but one hour in every week, in visiting his petty school, and see how the children are taught to read, to say their catechism and their prayers,' &c.—See Stowell's *Life of Wilson*, p. 117, &c.

talked of the assiduity of the Scottish clergy in visiting and privately instructing their parishioners, and observed how much in this they excelled the English clergy, Johnson, who would never hear one word against that church of which he was a worthy member and a distinguished ornament, could only reply, 'There are different ways of instructing. Our clergy pray and preach. The clergy of England have produced the most valuable books in support of religion, both in theory and practice.' The praise contained in this last sentence was thoroughly deserved. The clergy, if inactive in other respects, were not inactive with their pens; only of course the work done in this direction was done by a very small minority. It is not likely in any Church, certainly not in the English Church of the eighteenth century, that the great majority of the clergy could be profitably engaged in literary production.

But they all preached. What was the character of their sermons?

On this point, as on many others, the censure that has been passed upon the Church of the eighteenth century has been far too sweeping and far too severe. When one hears the sermons of the period stigmatised without any qualification as 'miserable moral essays,' and 'as unspeakably and indescribably bad,' one calls to mind almost indignantly the great preachers of the time, whose sermons have been handed down to us and may be referred to by anyone who chooses to do so. Surely this is not a proper description of the sermons of such men as Sherlock and Smalridge, Waterland, Seed and Ogden, Atterbury, Mudge, Hare and Bentley, and last but not least, Butler himself, whose practical sermons might be preached with advantage before a village congregation at this day. Too much stress has been laid upon a somewhat random observation of Sir William Blackstone, who 'had the curiosity, early in the reign of George III., to go from church to church and hear every clergyman of note in London. He says that he did not hear a single discourse which had more Christianity in it than the writings of Cicero, and that it would have been impossible for him to discover, from what he heard, whether the preacher were a follower of Confucius, of Mahomet, or of Christ.' The famous lawyer

does not specify the churches which he visited. He may have been unfortunate in his choice, or he may have been in a frame of mind which was not conducive to an unbiassed judgment;[1] but we have the best of all means of testing how far his sweeping censure may be fairly taken as applicable to the general character of the sermons of the day. The most celebrated of them are still in existence, and will give their own contradiction to the charge. It is not true that the preachers of this period entirely ignored the distinctive doctrines of Christianity; it would be more correct to say that they took the knowledge of them too much for granted—that they were as a rule too controversial, and that they too often appealed to merely prudential motives. And therefore the sermons of the century may rightly be noticed among the Church abuses of the period, although the abuse of this powerful engine for good was by no means so flagrant as it is sometimes represented to have been. Even Dr. Johnson, who set a very high value upon the sermons of his church, and declared on one occasion that 'sermons make a considerable branch of English literature, so that a library must be very imperfect if it has not a numerous collection of sermons,' yet confessed that they did not effect the good they ought to do. A sensitive dread of anything like enthusiasm was a marked characteristic of the eighteenth century; this dread did not originate with the clergy, but it was taken up by them and reflected in their sermons. This, of course, was at first greatly intensified by the excitement raised by the Methodist movement, although it was afterwards dispelled by the same cause. The orthodox preacher of the Hanoverian period felt bound to protest against the superstitions of Rome on the one hand and the fanaticism of sectaries on the other; in contrast with both of whom the moderation of 'our happy establishment' was extolled to the skies. To such a morbid

[1] Blackstone, though endowed with many excellent qualities, is said to have had a somewhat irritable temper, which, as he advanced in years, was rendered worse by a nervous affection. Bentham says 'that he seems to have had something about him which rendered breaches with him not difficult.' Lawyers are so accustomed to criticise arguments that they are apt to be somewhat severe judges of sermons. How many clergymen of the present day would like to have their sermons judged by the standard of a great lawyer of a somewhat irritable temperament?

extent was his dread of extremes carried, so carefully had he to guard himself against being supposed to diverge one hair's breadth from the middle course taken up by the Church of England, that in his fear of being over zealous he became over tame and colourless. Tillotson was his model, and, like most imitators, he exaggerated the defects of his master. So far as it is possible to group under one head so vast and varied an amount of composition, produced by men of the most diverse casts of mind, and extending over so long a period as a hundred years, one may perhaps fairly characterise the typical eighteenth-century sermon as too stiff and formal, too cold and artificial, appealing more to the reason than to the feelings, and so more calculated to convince the understanding than to affect the heart. 'We have no sermons,' said Dr. Johnson, 'addressed to the passions that are good for anything.'

These defects were brought out into stronger relief by their contrast to the very different style of preaching adopted by the revived Evangelical school. And the success of this latter school called the attention of some of the most thoughtful divines to the deficiencies of the ordinary style of preaching, which they fully admitted and unsparingly but judiciously exposed. Thus Archbishop Secker, in his Charge to the Diocese of Canterbury in 1758, in speaking of the 'new sect pretending to the strictest piety,' wisely urges his clergy 'to emulate what is good in them, avoiding what is bad, to edify their parishioners with awakening but rational and scriptural discourses, to teach the principles not only of virtue and natural religion, but of the Gospel, not as almost refined away by the modern refiner, but the truth as it is in Jesus and as it is taught by the Church.' Then, after having impressed upon them the duty of vindicating such doctrines as those of the Trinity, Christ's Sacrifice, and Sanctification by the Spirit, he adds a passage which is so important, and represents so accurately without exaggerating the real defects of the sermons of the day, that no apology will be needed for quoting it in full. 'The truth, I fear, is,' he says, 'that many if not most of us have dwelt too little on these doctrines in our sermons; by no means, I believe, as disbelieving or slighting them, but partly from knowing that formerly they had been

inculcated beyond their proportion and even to the disparagement of Christain obedience, partly from fancying them so generally received and remembered that little needs to be said but on social obligations; partly again, from not having studied theology deeply enough to treat of them ably and beneficially; God grant it may never have been for want of inwardly experiencing their importance. But whatever the cause, the effect hath been lamentable. Our people have grown less and less mindful (1) of the distinguishing articles of their creed; (2) as will always be the case, of that one which they hold in common with the heathens; they have forgotten, in effect, their Creator, as well as their Redeemer and Sanctifier; seldom or never worshipping him, or thinking of the state of their souls in relation to him; but flattering themselves that what they are pleased to call a moral and harmless life, though far from being either, is the one thing needful. Our vindication will be to preach fully and frequently these doctrines, yet so as to reserve a due share to the duties of common life, which, it is reported, some of our censurers do not. We must enforce them mainly by Christian motives.' Still stronger are the censures passed in later years upon the lack in the sermons of the day of evangelical doctrines, by men who were very far from identifying themselves with the Evangelical school. Thus Paley, in his seventh Charge,[1] comments upon the preaching of the period. 'We are setting up a kind of philosophical morality, detached from religion and independent of its influence, which may be cultivated, it is said, without Christianity as well as with it, and which, if cultivated, renders religion and religious institutions superfluous. We are in such haste to fly from enthusiasm and superstition that we are approaching to an insensibility to all religious influence. I do not mean to advise you to bring men back to enthusiasm, but to retard, if you can, the progress towards an opposite and worse extreme.' And Bishop Horsley, in his first Charge to the Diocese of St. David's in 1709, stigmatises the unchristian method of preaching in that dignified but incisive language of which he was a consummate master. The passage is well worth quoting in

[1] See vol. vii. 'Charge VII.' in Paley's *Works* in 7 vols.

full. 'A dread of the pernicious tendency of some extravagant opinions which persons more to be esteemed for the warmth of their piety than the soundness of their judgment have grafted in modern times upon the doctrine of justification by faith,—opinions which seem to emancipate the believer from the authority of all moral law, hath given general credit to another maxim which I never hear without extreme regret from the lips of a divine, either from the pulpit or in familiar conversation, namely, that practical religion and morality are one and the same thing, that moral duties constitute the whole or by far the better part of practical Christianity. This reduces practical Christianity to heathen virtue. These maxims, as far as they are received, have a pernicious influence on the ministry of the Word, and have contributed much to divest our sermons of the genuine spirit and savour of Christianity, and to reduce them to mere moral essays. Moral duties enforced by such arguments nowhere appear to so much advantage as in the writings of the heathen moralists, and are quite out of place in the pulpit. . . . The system chiefly in request with those who seem most in earnest in this strain of preaching is the strict but impracticable and sullen morality of the Stoic. Thus it too often happens that we lose sight of that which is our proper office, to publish the word of reconciliation. We make no other use of the high commission we bear than to come abroad, one day in the seven, dressed in solemn looks and in the external garb of holiness, to be the apes of Epictetus. I flatter myself we are in a state of recovery from the delusion. The compositions which are at this day delivered from our pulpits are, I think, in general of a more Christian cast than were often heard thirty years since, when I entered the ministry. Still the dry strain of moral preaching is too much in use. It has been the fashion to suppose a want of capacity in common people to be carried any great length in religious knowledge. Creation, preservation, and future punishment the vulgar may comprehend; but the Trinity, Incarnation, Expiation, Intercession, and Communion with the Holy Spirit, are supposed above their reach.' This supposition the Bishop proves to be false.

If, on the one hand, a somewhat heartless and vague method of dealing with the great distinctive doctrines of

Christianity, and especially the practical application of them, may fairly be reckoned among Church abuses, there was, on the other hand, an abuse of sermons which arose from an excess of zeal. There were occasions on which the preacher could make strong enough appeals to the passions; but unfortunately the subjects were not those which fall primarily within the province of the pulpit. But here again, as on so many other points, the abuse arose rather from the circumstances of the time than from the faults of the men. The proper province of the preacher was not clearly defined. The eighteenth century was a transition period in regard to the relation between politics and the pulpit. The lately emancipated press was beginning to make itself felt as a great power in the country; periodical literature was by degrees taking the place which in earlier times had been less fitly occupied by the pulpit for the ventilation of political questions. The bad old custom of 'tuning the pulpits' had died out; but political preaching could not be quickly or easily put a stop to. In the early part of the century bitter complaints were frequent against the abuse of the pulpit for political purposes. Defoe complained that 'the pulpit was daily profaned with invectives instead of sermons.'[1] Hoadly alluded in 1710 to the 'sermons about the damnableness of all resistance (declared even with a view to the late revolution) and about the necessity of turning to old paths;' and the same writer, personating 'an honest Tory giving his thoughts upon the doings of his party in 1710,' asks 'Would it not make a man of sober sense mad to hear what is vented from those *Pulpits* in which our friends triumph? The young man just come from the University, and the old man that hath long been in the world, agree in making them too often places of liberty how much soever they are against liberty in others. Nothing hardly is now to be heard of from them but the superiority of the Crown to everything except the Church, &c. We have opened our preachers' mouths, and who shall shut them we know not.'[2] The Sacheverell riots naturally produced a host of inflammatory sermons; but it was not merely on such occasions of temporary excitement

[1] *Review*, ii. 194.

[2] Hoadly's *Works*, vol. i. 'Thoughts from an Honest Tory.'

that the evil flourished. Notably, on such days as the 30th of January and the 29th of May, the High Church clergy were eager to improve the occasion by venting the most violent abuse upon their political adversaries. Moderate men felt the difficulty in dealing with the events which were commemorated on those days. In a sermon preached before the House of Lords on January 30, 1709, Bishop Fleetwood complains that 'this day is, through the excessive partiality of some of both sides, become a day of great trial to preachers. Talk of the duty of the subject to the Prince, and you are thought by some to preach away the people's liberties. Talk of the people's liberties, and you are opening presently a door to mutiny and disloyalty. The observation of this day is become (like November 5 to the Papists) distasteful to all Dissenters as well for the licence that is taken in inveighing against them, as for the praises that are bestowed upon Charles which look like exprobrations to them.' That it was not timidity, but a sense of the fitness of things (shared, it would appear, by other clergymen), which made Bishop Fleetwood reluctant to treat of politics in the pulpit, is proved by the fact that he dared to run counter to the popular feeling by publishing in 1712 four sermons with a preface in which be protested in noble and courageous language against the Peace of Utrecht, and so incensed the Government that his composition was ordered to be burnt by the House of Commons. All, however, did not feel as Fleetwood felt. Political preaching became so rife that in 1714 a Royal Proclamation was issued, ordering the clergy to abstain from State affairs in their sermons. After the subsidence of the excitement raised by the Rebellion of 1715, political sermons were not so frequent or so violent as they had been, but still, even to the end of the century, the pulpit was occasionally used and abused for political purposes. In 1772, Dr. Nowell had the audacity to preach before the House of Commons, on the 30th of January, a sermon on passive obedience in a style which was repugnant to the principles of the Revolution, and the usual vote of thanks for the sermon was expunged. In 1745, we find Secker, and Sherlock, and Warburton all preaching, and apparently with considerable effect, against the mischiefs which a change of dynasty would

produce. The effect of the sermons preached against the American colonists in 1774 has already been alluded to.

Before quitting this topic it may be necessary to add that, in ranking political sermons among the Church abuses of the eighteenth century, it is by no means intended to imply that the preacher ought under all circumstances to abstain from touching upon politics. There are occasions when it is his bounden duty as a Christian champion to advocate Christian measures and to protest against unchristian ones; the danger is, lest he should forget the Christian advocate in the political partisan; and it is only in so far as the political preachers of the eighteenth century fell into this snare (as at times they unquestionably did), that their sermons can he classed among the Church abuses of the period.

In treating of Church abuses, a question naturally arises which deserves and requires serious consideration. How far were these abuses responsible for the low state of morals and religion into which the nation sank during the reigns of the first two Georges? That lax morality and religious indifference prevailed more or less among all classes of society during this period, we learn from the concurrent testimony of writers of every kind and creed. Turn where one will, the same melancholy picture is presented to us. If we ask, what was the state of the Universities, which ought to be the centres of light diffusing itself throughout the whole nation, the training grounds of those who are to be the trainers of their fellow-men, we have the evidence of such different kinds of men as Swift, Defoe, Gray, Gibbon, Johnson, John Wesley, Lord Eldon, and Lord Chesterfield all agreeing on this point, that both the great Universities were neglectful and inefficient in the performance of their proper work. If we ask what was the state of the highest classes, we find that there were sovereigns on the throne whose immorality rivalled that of the worst of the Stuarts without any of their redeeming qualities, without any of the grace and elegance and taste for literature and the fine arts which to a certain extent palliated the vices of that unfortunate race; we find political morality at its lowest ebb; we find courtiers and statesmen living in open defiance of the laws of morality; we find luxury without taste, and profligacy without refinement predominant

among the highest circles. If we ask what was the state of the lower classes, we find such notices as these in a contemporary historian. '1729–30. Luxury created necessities, and these drove the lower ranks into the most abandoned wickedness. It was unsafe to travel or walk in the streets.' '1731. Profligacy among the people continued to an amazing degree.'[1] These extracts, taken almost at hap-hazard from the pages of a contemporary, are confirmed by abundance of testimony from all quarters. The middle classes were confessedly better than those either above or below them.[2] Nevertheless, there are not wanting indications that the standard of morality was not high among them. For example, it is the middle class rather than those above or below them who set the fashion of popular amusement. What, then, was the character of the amusements of the period? The stage, if it was a little improved since the wild days of the Restoration, was yet so bad that even a lax moralist like Lord Hervey was obliged to own in 1737, 'The present great licentiousness of the stage did call for some restraint and regulation.'[3] Such brutal pastimes as cock-fighting and bull-baiting were everywhere popular. Drunkenness was then, as now, a national vice, but it was less disreputable among the middle classes than it happily is at present.[4] What was the state of literature? Notwithstanding the improvement which such writers as Addison and Steele had effected it was still very impure. Let us take the evidence of the kindly and well-informed Sir Walter Scott. 'We should do great injustice to the present day by comparing our manners with those of the reign of George I. The writings even of the most esteemed poets of that period contain passages which now would be accounted to deserve the pillory. Nor was the tone of con-

[1] Similar complaints are uttered regarding 1737–8–9. H. Walpole writes of 1751 :—'The vices of the lower people were increased to a degree of robbery and murder beyond example.'—*Memoirs of the Reign of King George II.*, vol. i. ch. ii. p. 44.

[2] *e.g.* Archbishop Wake, in his letter to Courayer in 1726, writes :—'Iniquity in practice, God knows, abounds, chiefly in the two extremes, the highest and the lowest. The middle sort are serious and religious.' See also *Robinson Crusoe*, ch. i.

[3] Lord Hervey's *Memoirs*, ii. 341, in reference to the Bill to put all players under the direction of the Lord Chamberlain.

[4] See, *inter alia*, the description of a small squire of the reign of George II. in Grose's *Olio*, 1792.

versation more pure than that of composition; for the taint of Charles II.'s reign continued to infect society until the present reign [George III.], when, if not more moral, we are at least more decent.'[1] What was the state of the law? The criminal law was simply barbarous. Any theft of more than 40s. was punishable by death. Objects of horror, such as the heads of the rebel chiefs fixed on Temple Bar in 1746, were exposed in the vain hope that they might act as a 'terriculum.'[2] Prisons teemed with cruel abuses. The Roman Catholics were still suffering most unjustly, and if the laws had been rigorously enforced they would have suffered more cruelly still. A more tolerant spirit was happily gaining ground in the hearts of the nation, but so far as the laws were concerned there were few if any traces of it. The Act of 1779, for the relief of Dissenters, is affirmed to be 'the first statute in the direction of enlarged toleration which had been passed for ninety years.'[3] It was about the middle of the century when irreligion and immorality reached their climax. In 1753, Sir J. Barnard said publicly, 'At present it really seems to be the fashion for a man to declare himself of no religion.'[4] In the same year Secker declared that immorality and irreligion were grown almost beyond ecclesiastical power.

The question, then, arises, 'How far were the clergy responsible for this sad state of affairs?' As a body, they were distinctly superior to their contemporaries. It is a remarkable fact that when the clergy were as a rule very unpopular, during the reign of the Georges I. and II.,[5] and when, therefore, any evil reports against them would be eagerly caught up and circulated, we find singularly few charges of gross immorality brought against them. Excessive love of preferment, and culpable inactivity in performing the duties of their office, are the worst accusations that are brought against them as a body. Even men like Lord Hervey, and Horace

[1] Quoted in Andrews, 18th century.

[2] See Chapter LXX. of Lord Mahon's *History*.

[3] Skeats' *History of the Free Churches of England*, p. 465.

[4] *Parliamentary History*, vol. xiv. p. 1389.

[5] In Bishop Fleetwood's *Charge at Ely*, August 7, 1716, no less than three folio pages are filled with accounts of the abuse of the clergy and the way in which the clergy should meet it. Secker's, Butler's, and Horsley's Charges all touch on the same subject.

Walpole, and Lord Chesterfield rarely bring, and still more rarely substantiate, any charges against them on this head. Speaking of the shortcomings of the clergy in the early part of the century, Bishop Burnet, who does not spare his order, carefully guards against the supposition that he accuses them of leading immoral lives. 'When,' he writes, 'I say, live better, I mean not only to live without scandal, which I have found the greatest part of them to do, but to lead exemplary lives.'[1] Some years later, Bentley could boldly assert of 'the whole clergy of England' that they were 'the light and glory of Christianity,'[2] an assertion which he would scarcely have dared to make had they been sunk into such a slough of iniquity as they are sometimes represented to have been. Writing to Courayer in 1726, Archbishop Wake laments the infidelity and iniquity which abounded, but is of opinion that 'no care is wanting in our clergy to defend the Christian faith.'[3] John Wesley, while decrying the notion that the unworthiness of the minister vitiates the worth of his ministry, admits that 'in the present century the behaviour of the clergy in general is greatly altered for the better,' although he thinks them deficient both in piety and knowledge. Or if clerical testimony be suspected of partiality, we have abundance of lay evidence all tending to the same conclusion. Smollett, a contemporary, declares that 'in the reign of George II. 'the clergy were generally pious and exemplary.'[4] When a Presbyterian clergyman talked before Dr. Johnson of fat bishops and drowsy deans, he replied, 'Sir, you know no more of our Church than a Hottentot.'[5] Schlosser, who was no friend to the clergy, declares that they were disgusted with and preached against that contempt for morality which was shown by the Court and Ministers of George I.[6] One of the most impartial historians of our own day and country, in dwelling upon the immoralities of the age and upon the

[1] See the conclusion of Burnet's *History of His own Times.*

[2] Remarks on Collins' *Discourse of Freethinking*, by Phileleutherus Lipsiensis, xxiii.

[3] Quoted in Mrs. Thomson's *Memoirs of Lady Sundon and the Court and Times of George II.*

[4] Smollett's *Continuation of Hume*, v. 375.

[5] Boswell's *Life.*

[6] *History of the Eighteenth Century*, vol. iii. ch. iii. § 1.

clerical shortcomings, adds that 'the lives of the clergy were, as a rule, pure.'[1]

It is necessary to bring into prominence such testimony as this because there has been a tendency to insinuate what has never been proved—that the clergy were, as a body, living immoral lives. At the same time, it is not desired to palliate their real defects. It is admitted that a more active and earnest performance of their proper duties might have done much more than was done by the clergy to stem the torrent of iniquity.

Yet after all it is doubtful whether the clergy, even if they had been far more energetic and spiritually-minded than they were, could have effected such a reformation as was needed.[2] For there was a long train of causes at work dating back for more than a century, which tended not only to demoralise the nation, but also to cut it off from many influences for good which under happier circumstances the Church might have exercised. The turbulent and unsettled condition of both Church and State in the seventeenth century was bearing its fruit in the eighteenth. As in the life of an individual, so also in the life of a nation, there are certain crises which are terribly perilous to the character. In the eighteenth century England as a nation was going through such a crisis. She was passing from the old order to the new. The early part of the century was a period of many controversies—the Deistic controversy, the Non-Juring controversy, the Bangorian controversy, the Trinitarian controversy, the various ethical controversies, and all these following close upon the Puritan controversy and the Papal controversy, both of which had shaken the Constitution to its very foundation. How was it possible that a country could pass through such stormy scenes without having its faith unsettled, and the basis of its morals weakened? How could some help asking, What is truth? where is it to be found among all these conflicting elements? The Revolution itself, beneficial as its ultimate results were,

[1] Lord Mahon, ch. lxx.

[2] Bishop Butler, in his *Charge to the Clergy of Durham* in 1751, complains very justly: 'It is cruel usage we often meet with, in being censured for not doing what we cannot do, without, what we cannot have, the concurrence of our censurers. Doubtless very much reproach which now lights upon the clergy would be found to fall elsewhere if due allowance were made for things of this kind.'

was in its immediate effects attended with evil. England submitted to be governed by foreigners, but she had to sacrifice much and stoop low before she could submit to the necessity. All the romantic halo which had hung about royalty was rudely swept away. Queen Anne was the last sovereign of these realms round whom still lingered something of the 'divinity that doth hedge a king.' Under the Georges loyalty assumed a different form from that which it had taken before. The sentiment which had attached their subjects to the Tudors and the Stuarts was exchanged for a colder and less enthusiastic feeling; mere policy took the place of chivalry.

Nor was it only in her outward affairs that the nation was passing through a great and fundamental change. In her inner and spiritual life she was also in a period of transition. The problem which was started in the early part of the sixteenth century had never yet been fairly worked out. The nation had been for more than a century and a half so busy in dealing with the pressing questions of the hour that it had never yet had time to face the far deeper questions which lay behind these—questions which concerned not the different modes of Christianity, but the very essence of Christianity itself. The matters which had so violently agitated the country in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were now virtually settled. The Church was now at last 'established.' But other questions arose. It was not now asked, 'Is this or that mode of Church government most Scriptural?' 'Is this or that form of worship most in accordance with the mind of Christ?' but, 'What *is* this Scripture to which all appeal?' 'Who *is* this Christ whom all own as Master?' This is really what is meant, so far as religion is concerned, when it is said that the eighteenth century was the age of reason—alike in the good and in the bad sense of that term. The defenders of Christianity, no less than its assailants, had to prove, above all things, the reasonableness of their position. The discussion was inevitable, and in the end productive of good, but while it was going on it could not fail to be to many minds harmful. Reason and faith, though not really antagonistic, are often in seeming antagonism. Many might well ask, Can we no longer rest upon a simple, child-

like faith, founded on authority? What is there, human or Divine, that is left to reverence? The heart of England was still sound at the core, and she passed through the crisis triumphantly; but the transition period was a dangerous and a demoralising one, and there is no wonder that she sank for a time under the wave that was passing over her.

It has been already said that the morbid dread of anything which savoured either of Romanism or Puritanism tended to reduce the Church to a dead level of uniform dulness. The same dread affected the nation at large as well as the Church. It practically cut off the laity from influences which might have elevated them. Anything like the worship of God in the beauty of holiness, all that is conveyed in the term symbolism, the due observance of Fast and Festival—in fact, all those things which to a certain class of minds are almost essential to raise devotion—were too much associated in men's minds with that dreaded enemy from whom the nation had but narrowly escaped in the preceding age to be able to be turned to any good effect in the eighteenth century. When it is remembered that such a man as Bishop Butler, whose whole tone of mind was utterly alien to the Romish system, was suspected of Popery because he set up a cross in his chapel,[1] and that the Wesleys and Whitefield were constantly accused of the same tendency, we may realise how strong and unreasonable such fears often were, and how utterly men were cut off from one class of influences which, if judiciously exercised, might have done much to raise many from the dead level of cold, prim propriety, which was the bane of the religion of the eighteenth century.

On the other hand, stirring appeals to the feelings, analyses of spiritual frames—everything, in short, which was termed in the jargon of the seventeenth century 'savoury preaching' and 'a painful ministry,' was too much associated in men's minds with the hated reign of the Saints to be employed with any good effect.

And thus, both on the objective and on the subjective side, the people were practically debarred from influences which might have made their religion a more lovely or a more hearty thing. A curious illustration of the prejudices

[1] And for some expressions in his Durham Charge.

which existed in men's minds in both directions may be found in the reluctance to introduce hymns into public worship. It was thought that all ancient hymns were Popish and all modern hymns Puritan, and therefore, as the nation had an equal horror of Popery and Puritanism, it was content that the National Church should blend with the finest liturgy in the world the miserable doggerel of Tate and Brady.[1]

Again, if the clergy showed, as they confessedly did, an inertness, an obstructiveness, a want of expansiveness, and a dogged resistance to any adaptation of old forms to new ideas, they were in these respects thoroughly in accord with the feelings of the mass of the nation. The clergy were not popular, but it was not their want of zeal and enterprise which made them unpopular; if in exceptional cases they did show any tendency in these directions, this only made them more unpopular than ever. Had it been otherwise we might naturally have expected to find the zeal which was lacking in the National Church showing itself in other Christian bodies. But we find nothing of the sort. The torpor which had overtaken our Church extended itself to all forms of Christianity. Edmund Calamy, a Nonconformist, lamented in 1730 that 'a real decay of serious religion, both in the Church *and out of it*, was very visible.' Dr. Watts declares that in his day 'there was a *general* decay of vital religion in the hearts and lives of men.'[2] A modern writer who makes no secret of his partiality for Nonconformists owns that 'religion, whether in the Established Church or out of it, never made less progress than after the cessation of the Bangorian and Salter's Hall disputes. Breadth of thought and charity of sentiment increased, but religious activity did not.'[3] In 1712 Defoe considered 'Dissenters' interests to be in a declining state, not so much as regarded their wealth and numbers as the qualifications of their ministers, the decay of piety, and the abandonment of their political friends.' Such is the testimony of Nonconformists themselves, who will not be suspected of taking too dark a view of the condition of

[1] But see in vol. ii. 272, &c. of this work, a further account of the subject.

[2] Calamy's *Life and Times*, vol. ii. p. 531.

[3] Skeats' *History of the Free Churches*, pp. 248, 313. 'The strictness of Puritanism, without its strength or piety, was beginning to reign among Dissenters.'

Nonconformity. There is no need to add to this the evidence of Churchmen. It is a fact patent to all students of the period that the moral and religious stagnation of the times extended to all religious bodies outside as well as inside the National Church. The most intellectually active part of Dissent was drifting gradually into Socinianism and Unitarianism.

There is yet one more circumstance to be taken into account in estimating the extent to which the clergy were responsible for the irreligion and immorality which prevailed. A change of manners was fast rendering ineffectual a weapon which they had formerly used for waging war against sin. Ecclesiastical censures were becoming little better than a mere *brutum fulmen*. Complaints of the difficulty, not to say impossibility, of enforcing Church discipline are of constant occurrence. In 1704 Archbishop Sharp, while urging his clergy to present 'any that are resolved to continue heathens, and absolutely refuse to come to church,' and, while admitting that the abuses of the commutation for penance were 'a cause of complaints against the spiritual courts and of the invidious reflections cast upon them,' adds that 'he was very sensible both of the decay of discipline in general and of the curbs put upon any effectual prosecution of it by the temporal courts, and of the difficulty of keeping up what little was left entire to the ecclesiastics without creating offence and administering matter for aspersion and evil surmises.'[1] The same excellent prelate, when a writ *de excommunicato capiendo* was evaded by writs of *supersedeas* from Chancery, wrote to the Archbishop of Canterbury asking him 'to represent the case to the Lord Chancellor, that he might give such directions that his courts might go on to enforce ecclesiastical censures with civil penalties, without fear of being baffled in their proceedings.'[2] In the later meetings of Convocation this subject of the enforcement of Church discipline was constantly suggested for discussion; but, as questions which were, or were supposed to be, of more immediate interest claimed precedence, no practical result

[1] *Life of Archbishop Sharp*, by his son, edited by T. Newcome, p. 214.
[2] Id. p. 217.

ensued.[1] The matter, however, was not suffered to fall altogether into abeyance. In 1741 Bishop Secker gives the same advice to the clergy of the diocese of Oxford as Archbishop Sharp had given nearly forty years before to those of the diocese of York, but he seems still more doubtful as to whether it could be effectually carried out. 'Persons,' he writes, 'who profess not to be of our Church, if persuasions will not avail, must be let alone. But other absentees must, after due patience, be told that, unwilling as you are, it will be your duty to present them, unless they reform; and if, when this warning hath been repeated and full time allowed for it to work, they still persist in their obstinacy, I beg you to do it. For this will tend much to prevent the contagion from spreading, of which there is else great danger.' In 1753 he repeats his injunctions, but in a still more desponding tone. 'Offences,' he says, 'against religion and morals churchwardens are bound by oath to present; and incumbents or curates are empowered and charged by the 113th and following canons to join with them in presenting, if need be, or to present alone if they refuse. This implies what the 26th canon expresses, that the minister is to urge churchwardens to perform that part of their office. Try first by public and private rebukes to amend them; but if these are ineffectual, get them corrected by authority. I am perfectly sensible that immorality and irreligion are grown almost beyond the reach of ecclesiastical power, which, having in former times been very unwarrantably extended, hath since been very unjustly and imprudently cramped and weakened many ways.' After having given directions about excommunications and penance, he urges them, as a last resort, 'to remind the people that, however the censures of the Church may be relaxed or evaded, yet God's judgment cannot.' Yet even so late as 1766 he explains to candidates for orders the text addressed to them at their ordination, 'Whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained,' as conferring 'a right of inflicting ecclesiastical censures for a shorter or longer time, and of taking them off, which is, in regard to external communion, retaining or forgiving offences.' 'Our acts,' he adds,

[1] See *The History of the Present Parliament and Convocation*, 1711, and Cardwell's *Synodalia*, vol. ii. for the years 1710, 1712, 1713, 1715.

'as those of temporal judges, are to be respected as done by competent authority. Nor will other proofs of repentance be sufficient if submission to the discipline of the Church of Christ, when it hath been offended and requires due satisfaction, be obstinately refused.'[1] This is not the place to discuss the possibility or the advisability under altered circumstances of enforcing ecclesiastical discipline, but in common fairness to the clergy, who were accused of doing little or nothing to oppose the general depravity, it should be borne in mind that they were practically debarred from using a formidable weapon which in earlier times had been wielded with great effect.[2]

Nor should we forget that if the clergy were inactive and unsuccessful in one direction, many of them at least were singularly active and successful in another. There was within the pale of the Church at the period of which we are speaking a degree of intellect and learning which has rarely been surpassed in its palmiest days. When among the higher clergy were found such men as Butler, and Hare, and Sherlock, and Warburton, and South, and Conybeare, and Waterland, and Bentley, men who were more than a match for the assailants of Christianity, formidable as these antagonists undoubtedly were, when within her fold were found men of such distinguished piety as Law and Wilson, Berkeley, and Benson, the state of the Church could not be wholly corrupt.

And, finally, it should be remembered that if England was morally and spiritually in low estate at this period, she was, at any rate, in a better plight than her neighbours. If there were Church abuses in England there were still worse in France. If there was too wide an interval here between the higher and the lower clergy, the inequality was not so great as there, where 'while the prelates of the Church lived with a pomp and state falling little short of the magnificence of royalty, not a few of the poorer clergy had scarcely the wherewithal to live at all,' where 'the superior clergy regarded the curés as hired servitors, whom in order to

[1] See Secker's *Charges, passim.*

[2] The circumstances in the Isle of Man were of course exceptional. For specimens of the rigour with which good Bishop Wilson maintained ecclesiastical discipline there see Stowell's *Life of Wilson*, pp. 198, 199, &c.

dominate it was prudent to keep in poverty and ignorance.' If the distribution of patronage on false principles and the inordinate love of preferment were abuses in England, matters were worse in France, where 'there was an open traffic in benefices; the episcopate was nothing but a secular dignity; it was necessary to be count or marquis in order to become a successor of the Apostles, unless some extraordinary event snatched some little bishopric for a parvenu from the hands of the minister;' and where 'the bishops squandered the revenues of their provinces at the Court.'[1] If the lower classes were neglected here, they were not, as in France, dying from misery and hunger at the rate of a million a year. Neither, sordid as the age was in England, was it so sordid as in Germany, where a coarse eudæmonism and a miscalled illuminism were sapping the foundations of Christianity.

Moreover, England, unlike her next-door neighbour, improved as the years rolled on. A gradual but distinct alteration for the better may be traced in the later part of the century. Many causes contributed to effect this. After the accession of George III. a growing sense of security began to pervade the country. An unsettled state is always prejudicial to national morals, and there were henceforward no serious thoughts of deranging the established order of things. Influences, too, were at work which tended to raise the tone of morality and religion in all orders of society. The upper classes had a good example set them by the blameless lives of the King and the Queen. In the present day, when it is the fashion to ridicule the foibles and to condemn the troublesome interference in State affairs of the well-meaning but often ill-judging King, it is the more necessary to bear in mind the debt of gratitude which the nation owed him for the good effects which his personal character unquestionably produced —effects which, though they told more directly and immediately upon the upper classes, yet permeated more or less through all the strata of society. Among the middle classes, too, there arose a set of men whose influence for good it would be difficult to exaggerate. Foremost among them stands the great and good Dr. Johnson. 'Dr. Johnson,'

[1] *Le Clergé de Quatre-vingt-neuf*, par J. Wallon, quoted in the *Church Quarterly Review* for October 1877, art. v., 'France in the Eighteenth Century.'

writes Lord Mahon, 'stemmed the tide of infidelity.' And the greatest of modern satirists does not state the case too strongly when he declares that 'Johnson had the ear of the nation. His immense authority reconciled it to loyalty and shamed it out of irreligion. He was revered as a sort of oracle, and the oracle declared for Church and King. He was a fierce foe to all sin, but a gentle enemy to all sinners.'[1] Sir J. Reynolds, and E. Burke, and Hogarth, and Pitt, each in his way, helped on the good work. The rising Evangelical school —the Newtons, the Venns, the Cecils, the Romaines, among the clergy, and the Wilberforces, the Thorntons, the Mores, the Cowpers, among the laity—all affected beneficially to an immense extent the upper and middle classes, while among the lower classes the Methodist movement was effecting incalculable good. These latter influences, however, were far too important an element in the national amelioration to be dealt with at the end of a chapter. Suffice it here to add that, glaring as were the abuses of the Church of the eighteenth century, they could not and did not destroy her undying vitality. Even when she reached her nadir there was sufficient salt left to preserve the mass from becoming utterly corrupt. The fire had burnt low, but there was yet enough light and heat left to be fanned into a flame which was in due time to illumine the nation and the nation's Church.

J. H. O.

[1] W. M. Thackeray, *English Humourists of the Eighteenth Century.*

CHAPTER II.

THE EVANGELICAL REVIVAL.

(1) THE METHODIST MOVEMENT.

THE middle part of the eighteenth century presents a somewhat curious spectacle to the student of Church history. From one point of view the Church of England seemed to be signally successful; from another, signally unsuccessful. Intellectually her work was a great triumph, morally and spiritually it was a great failure. She passed not only unscathed, but with greatly increased strength, through a serious crisis. She crushed most effectually an attack which, if not really very formidable or very systematic, was at any rate very noisy and very violent; and her success was at least as much due to the strength of her friends as to the weakness of her foes. So completely did she beat her assailants out of the field that for some time they were obliged to make their assaults under a masked battery in order to obtain a popular hearing at all. It should never be forgotten that the period in which the Church sank to her nadir in one sense was also the period in which she almost reached her zenith in another sense. Seldom has the history of any Church been adorned at one and the same time with greater names than those of Butler, and Waterland, and Berkeley, and Sherlock the younger, and Warburton, and Conybeare, and other intellectual giants who flourished in the reigns of the first two Georges. They cleared the way for that revival which is the subject of these pages. It was in consequence of the successful results of their efforts that the ground was opened to the heart-stirring preachers and disinterested workers who gave practical effect to the truths which had been so ably vindicated. It was unfortunate that there should ever have been any antagonism between men who were really workers

in the same great cause. Neither could have done the other's part of the work. Warburton could have no more moved the hearts of living masses to their inmost depths, as Whitefield did, than Whitefield could have written the 'Divine Legation.' Butler could no more have carried on the great crusade against sin and Satan which Wesley did, than Wesley could have written the 'Analogy.' But without such work as Wesley and Whitefield did, Butler's and Warburton's would have been comparatively inefficacious, and without such work as Butler and Warburton did, Wesley's and Whitefield's work would have been, humanly speaking, impossible.

The truths of Christianity required not only to be defended, but to be applied to the heart and life; and this was the special work of what has been called, for want of a better term, 'the Evangelical school.' The term is not altogether a satisfactory one, because it seems to imply that this school alone held the distinctive doctrines of Christianity. But this was by no means the case. All the great features of that system which is summed up in the term 'the Gospel' may be plainly recognised in the writings of those theologians who belonged to a different and in some respects a violently antagonistic school of thought. The fall of man, his redemption by Christ, his sanctification by the Holy Spirit, his absolute need of God's grace both preventing and following him—these are doctrines which an unprejudiced reader will find as clearly enunciated in the writings of Waterland, and Butler, and Warburton as by those who are called *par excellence* Evangelical writers.[1] And yet it is perfectly true that there is a sense in which the latter may fairly claim the

[1] Thus Warburton writes in his *Doctrine of Grace*, p. 717, 'The doctrine of redemption is the *primum mobile* of the Gospel system. To this the Church must steadily adhere, let the storm against it beat from what quarter it may. It is the first duty of the minister of religion to secure this great foundation. The everlasting Gospel, whose main pillar is this doctrine of redemption,' &c.; and again, p. 720, 'Preserve the faith pure and entire as it was delivered to the saints under the idea of redemption of the world by the Son of God in the voluntary sacrifice of Himself on the Cross;' and once more, p. 722, 'To instruct the world in wisdom and righteousness was but a secondary end of Christ's mission; the first and primary was to become its sanctification and redemption.' It is scarcely necessary to quote passages from Waterland and Butler to the same effect; the truth of what is asserted in the text will be obvious to any intelligent reader of them. In fact, their orthodoxy was never disputed; but as Warburton has been falsely accused of Socinianism it seemed necessary to prove in his case the assertion made above.

epithet 'Evangelical' as peculiarly their own; for they made what had sunk too generally into a mere barren theory a living and fruitful reality. The truths which they brought into prominence were not new truths, nor truths which were actually denied, but they were truths which acquired under the vigorous preaching of the revivalists a freshness and a vitality, and an influence over men's practice, which they had to a great extent ceased to exercise. In this sense the revival of which we are to treat may with perfect propriety be termed the *Evangelical* Revival. The epithet is more suitable than either 'Methodist' or 'Puritan,' both of which are misleading. The term 'Methodist' does not, of course, in itself imply anything discreditable or contemptuous; but it was given as a name of contempt, and was accepted as such by those to whom it was first applied.[1] Moreover, not only the term, but also the system with which it has become identified was repudiated by many—perhaps by the majority—of those who would be included under the title of 'Evangelical.' It was not because they feared the ridicule and contempt attaching to the term 'Methodist' that so many disowned its application to themselves, but because they really disapproved of many things which were supposed to be connoted by the term. Their adversaries would persist in confounding them with those who gloried in the title of 'Methodists,' but the line of demarcation is really very distinct.

Still more misleading is the term 'Puritan.' The 'Evangelicalism' of the eighteenth century was by no means simply a revival of the system properly called Puritanism as it existed in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. There were, of course, certain leading features which were common to the two schemes. We can recognise a sort of family likeness in the strictness of life prescribed by both systems, in their abhorrence of certain kinds of amusement, in their fondness for Scriptural phraseology, and, above all, in the importance

[1] Mr. Curteis (*Bampton Lectures* for 1871, Lect. vii. p. 354, note) ingeniously suggests that 'probably "method" was a household word at Epworth parsonage, and was frequently on the lips of the Wesleys at Oxford.' This is highly probable, and their enemies may have taken up the name 'Methodist' from this fact; but there seems to be no doubt that the term *was* first applied in a contemptuous sense. Thus Wesley, in his loyal address to the King in 1744, terms it the address of 'Societies in *derision* called Methodists.'

which they both attached to the distinctive doctrines of Christianity. But the points of difference between them were at least as marked as the points of resemblance. In Puritanism, politics were inextricably intermixed with theology; Evangelicalism stood quite aloof from politics. The typical Puritan was gloomy and austere; the typical Evangelical was bright and genial. The Puritan would not be kept *within* the pale of the National Church; the Evangelical would not be kept *out* of it. The Puritan was dissatisfied with our liturgy, our ceremonies, our vestments, and our hierarchy; the Evangelical was not only perfectly contented with every one of these things, but was ready to contend for them all as heartily as the Highest of High Churchmen. The Puritans produced a very powerful body of theological literature; the Evangelicals were more conspicuous as good men and stirring preachers than as profound theologians. On the other hand, if Puritanism was the more fruitful in theological literature, both devotional and controversial, Evangelicalism was infinitely more fruitful in works of piety and benevolence; there was hardly a single missionary or philanthropic scheme of the day which was not either originated or warmly taken up by the Evangelical party. The Puritans were frequently in antagonism with 'the powers that be,' the Evangelicals never; no amount of ill-treatment could put them out of love with our constitution both in Church and State.

These points will be further illustrated in the course of this chapter; they are touched upon here merely to show that neither 'Methodist' nor 'Puritan' would be an adequate description of the great revival whose course we are now to follow; only it should be noted that in terming it the 'Evangelical' revival we are applying to it an epithet which was not applied until many years after its rise. When and by whom the term was first used to describe the movement it is difficult to say. Towards the close of the century it is not unusual to find among writers of different views censures of those 'who have arrogated to themselves the exclusive title of Evangelical,' as if there were something presumptuous in the claim, and something uncharitable in the tacit assumption that none but those so called were worthy of the designation; but it is very unusual indeed to find the writers of the Evan-

gelical school applying the title to their own party, and when they do it is generally followed by some apology, intimating that they only use it because it has become usual in common parlance. There is not the slightest evidence to show that the early Evangelicals claimed the title as their own in any spirit of self-glorification.

Thus much of the name. Let us now turn to the thing itself. How did this great movement, so fruitful in good to the whole community, first arise?

It is somewhat remarkable that, so far as the revival can be traced to any one individual, the man to whom the credit belongs was never himself an Evangelical. '*William Law*' (1686–1761) 'begot Methodism,' wrote Bishop Warburton; and in one sense the statement was undoubtedly true,[1] but what a curious paradox it suggests! A distinctly High Churchman was the originator of what afterwards became the Low Church party—a Nonjuror, of the most decidedly 'Orange' element in the Church,—a Quietist who scarcely ever quitted his retirement in an obscure Northamptonshire village, of that party which, above all others, was distinguished for its activity, bodily no less than spiritual,—a clergyman who rarely preached a sermon, of the party whose great forte was preaching!

William Law's character and writings have already been discussed in connection with the subjects of enthusiasm and mysticism. His name is connected with the Evangelical revival mainly on account of one, or at most two, of the many books which he published—his 'Serious Call to a Holy and Devoted Life' and his 'Christian Perfection.' The former of these demands our attention, for it would be hardly too much to say that this short treatise, so far as human instrumentality was concerned, originated the Evangelical revival. Few books in the English language have exercised, directly or indirectly, so vast an influence as the 'Serious Call.' It is marvellous to observe what different kinds of minds were permanently affected by it. Dr. Johnson distinctly attributes his first serious impressions to the perusal of it. 'I became,' he says, 'a sort of lax *talker* against religion, for I did not much think against it; and this lasted until I went to Oxford,

[1] More true than the assertion which follows—'and Count Zinzendorf rocked the cradle.'

where I took up Law's "Serious Call to a Holy Life," expecting to find it a dull book (as such books generally are). But I found Law quite an over-match for me, and this was the first occasion of my thinking in earnest.'[1] But it was on the leaders of the Evangelical revival—on those of the second as well as on those of the first generation—that the 'Serious Call' made the deepest impression. John Wesley at one time took Law for his oracle, and though the two afterwards diverged widely, Wesley never lost his admiration of the 'Serious Call.' He used it as a text-book for the highest class at Kingswood School. A very short time before his death he spoke of it as 'a treatise which will hardly be excelled, if it be equalled, in the English tongue, either for beauty of expression or for justice and depth of thought;' and, what is still more to the present purpose, he owned that Law's 'Serious Call' and 'Christian Perfection' sowed the seed of Methodism. Charles Wesley was equally impressed with the work; so was George Whitefield. 'God,' writes the latter, 'worked powerfully upon my soul by that excellent treatise;' and long after he had embraced very different opinions from those of the author he still spoke of him as 'the great Mr. Law.' Henry Venn in 1750 read repeatedly Law's 'Serious Call,' and endeavoured to frame his life according to that model. He subsequently tried to realise Law's 'Christian Perfection.' Thomas Scott, in consequence of reading the 'Serious Call,' made a vow never more to engage in any pursuit not evidently subservient to his ministerial usefulness or the propagation of Christianity. Well might Southey say of it *more suo*, 'Few books have made more religious enthusiasts.'

It frequently happens that when a book is introduced to us with such a flourish of trumpets as this, the first feeling on referring to the work itself is one of disappointment. Our expectations are raised too high, and we are inclined to ask, 'What was there, after all, in this vaunted work to produce so deep and widespread an effect?' But no such feeling will be raised in any thoughtful reader of the 'Serious Call' at the present day. Its arguments are those which are appli-

[1] Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, vol. i. 69. See also *Quarterly Review* for April 1858, 'Early Life of Johnson,' where the names of others outside the Evangelical circle who were impressed with the *Serious Call* are mentioned.

cable to men of all times. It is the old, old contrast between the Church and the world, between the ideal and the real, between Christianity as it actually is and Christianity as it ought to be, which forms the basis of Law's reasoning. And he presses home with marvellous force the inconsistency which most must feel between profession and practice. The purity of his diction, the clearness and logicalness of his reasoning, the wit and vigour of his descriptions, and, above all, the beautiful spirit of piety which pervades the whole work, and the evident earnestness and reality of the writer, may be appreciated as well in the latter part of the nineteenth as in the earlier part of the eighteenth century. Some of his imaginary characters remind one of the delicate touch of Addison; but while Addison is content to play lightly over the surface of the question Law penetrates to its very depths. The defect of the treatise is, that the remedy is not so adequately set forth as the disease. It was no mere narrow prejudice which led the Evangelical party to complain that there was too little of the Gospel in the 'Serious Call;' but, so far as it goes, this great work is fully worthy of the reputation which it won and of the vast effects which it produced.

As Law had no further share in the Evangelical movement there is no need to dwell upon his singular career. We may pass on at once from the master to one of his most appreciative and distinguished disciples.

If Law was the most effective writer *John Wesley* (1703–91) was unquestionably the most effective worker connected with the early phase of the Evangelical revival. If Law gave the first impulse to the movement Wesley was the first and the ablest who turned it to practical account. John Wesley's sentiments and acts in reference to two very important subjects—enthusiasm and Church comprehension—have already been described. In this place, therefore, he need not be regarded in either of these aspects; nor need he be regarded, except incidentally, as founder of the sect which bears his name. He is now to be viewed simply as a great Evangelical reformer. Nor need the details of his active and useful life here be recorded. How he formed at Oxford a little band of High Church ascetics; how he went forth to

Georgia on an unsuccessful mission, and returned to England a sadder and a wiser man; how he fell under the influence of the Moravians; how his whole course and habits of mind were changed on one eventful day in 1738; how for more than half a century he went about doing good through evil report and good report; how he encountered with undaunted courage opposition from all quarters, from the Church which he loved and from the people whom he only wished to benefit; how he formed societies, and organised them with marvellous skill; how he travelled thousands of miles, and preached thousands of sermons throughout the length and breadth of England, in Scotland, in Ireland, and in America; how he became involved in controversies with his friends and fellow-workers—is not all this and much more written in books which may be in everybody's hands—in the books of Southey, of Tyerman, of Watson, of Beecham, of Stevens, of Coke and Moore, of Isaac Taylor, of Julia Wedgwood, of Urlin, and of many others? It need not, therefore, be repeated here. Neither is it necessary to vindicate the character of this great and good man from the imputations which were freely cast upon him both by his contemporaries (and that not only by the adversaries, but by many of the friends and promoters of the Evangelical movement) and also by some of his later biographers. The saying of Mark Antony—

> The evil that men do lives after them;
> The good is oft interred with their bones—

has been reversed in the case of John Wesley. Posterity has fully acquitted him of the charge of being actuated by a mere vulgar ambition, of desiring to head a party, of an undue love of power. It has at last owned that if ever a poor frail human being was actuated by pure and disinterested motives that man was John Wesley. Eight years before his death he said, 'I have been reflecting on my past life; I have been wandering up and down between fifty and sixty years, endeavouring in my poor way to do a little good to my fellow-creatures.' And the more closely his career has been analysed the more plainly has the truth of his own words been proved. His quarrel was solely with sin and Satan. His master passion was, in his own often-repeated expression, the love

of God and the love of man for God's sake. The world has at length done tardy justice to its benefactor. Indeed, the danger seems now to lie in a different direction—not, indeed, in over-estimating the character of this remarkable man, for this it would be difficult to do, but in making him a mere name to conjure by, a mere peg to hang pet theories upon. The Churchman casts in the teeth of the Dissenter John Wesley's unabated attachment to the Church; the Dissenter casts in the teeth of the Churchman the bad treatment Wesley received from the Church; and each can make out a very fair case for his own side. But meanwhile the real John Wesley is apt to be presented to us in a very one-sided fashion. Moreover, his character has suffered from the partiality of injudicious friends quite as much as from the unjust accusations of enemies. It is peculiarly cruel to represent him as a faultless being, a sort of vapid angel. We can never take much interest in such a character, because we feel quite sure that, if the whole truth were before us, he would appear in a different light. John Wesley's character is a singularly interesting one, interesting for this very reason, that he was such a thorough man—full of human infirmities, constantly falling into errors of judgment and inconsistencies, but withal a noble specimen of humanity, a monument of the power of Divine grace to mould the rough materials of which man is made into a polished stone, meet to take its place in the fabric of the temple of the living God.

The best interpreter of John Wesley is John Wesley himself. He has left us in his own writings a picture of himself, drawn by his own hand, which is far more faithful than that which has been drawn by any other.[1]

The whole family of the Wesleys, including the father, the mother, and all the brothers and sisters without exception, was a very interesting one. There are certain traits of character which seem to have been common to them all.

[1] The present writer has carefully studied all the biographies and sketches of John Wesley upon which he could lay his hands, and freely owns that he has derived much information from them; but the information which he has derived from Wesley's own writings far exceeds that which he has obtained from any other source; and therefore, while the former will be rarely quoted, it is thought scarcely necessary to apologise for quoting freely from the latter in illustration of the remarks which will now be made.

Strong, vigorous good sense, an earnest, straightforward desire to do their duty, a decidedness in forming opinions, and a plainness, not to say bluntness, in expressing them, belong to all alike. The picture given us of the family at Epworth Rectory is an illustration of the remark made in another chapter that the wholesale censure of the whole body of the parochial clergy in the early part of the eighteenth century has been far too sweeping and severe. Here is an instance —and it is not spoken of as a unique, or even an exceptional, instance—of a worthy clergyman who was, with his whole family, living an exemplary life, and adorning the profession to which he belonged. The influence of his early training, and especially that of his mother,[1] is traceable throughout the whole of Wesley's career; and it is not unreasonable to suppose that Wesley's unflinching attachment to the Church, his reluctance to speak ill of her ministers,[2] and the displeasure which he constantly showed when he observed any tendency on the part of his followers to separate from her communion may have been intensified by his recollections of that good and useful parson's family in Lincolnshire in which he passed his youth.

The year 1729 is the date which Wesley himself gives of the rise of that revival of religion in which he himself took so prominent a part. It is somewhat curious that he places the commencement of the revival at a date nine years earlier than that of his own conversion; but it must be remembered that in his later years he took a somewhat different view of the latter event from that which he held in his hot youth. He believed that before 1738 he had faith in God as a servant; after that, as a son. At any rate, we shall not be far wrong in regarding that little meeting at Oxford of a few young men, called in derision the Holy Club, the Sacramentarian Club, and finally the *Methodists*, as the germ of that great movement now to be described. No doubt the views of its members materially changed in the course of years; but the object of the later movement was precisely the same as that of the little band from the very first—viz. to promote the love of God and the love of man for God's sake, to stem

[1] 'The true founder of Wesleyanism was Mrs. Wesley.'—Julia Wedgwood.

[2] He was, however, sometimes tempted to use unseemly language of the clergy. See extracts from his journals quoted in Warburton's *Doctrine of Grace*.

the torrent of vice and irreligion, and to fill the land with a godly and useful population.

This, it is verily believed, was from first to last the master key to a right understanding of John Wesley's life. Everything must give way to this one great object. In subservience to this he was ready to sacrifice many predilections, and thereby to lay himself open to the charge of changeableness and inconsistency.

As an illustration, let us take the somewhat complicated question of John Wesley's Churchmanship. That he was most sincerely and heartily attached to the Church of England is undeniable. In the language of one of his most ardent but not undiscriminating admirers, 'he was a Church of England man even in circumstantials; there was not a service or a ceremony, a gesture or a habit, for which he had not an unfeigned predilection.'[1] He was, in fact, a distinctly High Churchman, but a High Churchman in a far nobler sense than that in which the term was generally used in the eighteenth century. Indeed, in this latter sense John Wesley hardly falls under the denomination at all. As a staunch supporter of the British Constitution, both in Church and State, he was no doubt in favour of the establishment of the National Church as an essential part of that Constitution. But it was not this view of the Church which was uppermost in his mind. On several occasions he spoke and wrote of the Church as a national establishment in terms which would have shocked the political High Churchmen of his day. He 'can find no trace of a national Church in the New Testament;' it is 'a mere political institution;'[2] 'the establishment by Constantine was a gigantic evil;' 'the King and the Parliament have no right to prescribe to him what pastor he shall use;'[3] he does not care to discuss the question as to

[1] 'Remarks on the Life and Character of John Wesley,' by Alexander Knox, printed at the close of Southey's *Life of Wesley*, vol. iii. p. 319.

[2] In the Minutes of Conference, 1747, 'What instance or ground is there in the New Testament for a "*national*" Church? We know none at all,' &c. 'The greatest blow,' he said, 'Christianity ever received was when Constantine the Great called himself a Christian and poured in a flood of riches, honour, and power upon the Christians, more especially upon the clergy.' 'If, as my Lady says, all outward establishments are Babel, so is this establishment. Let it stand for me. I neither set it up nor pull it down. . . . Let us build the City of God.'

[3] But he asserts the rights of the civil power in things indifferent, and reminds

whether all outward establishments are a Babel. But does it follow from this and similar language that he taught, as the historians of the Dissenters contend, the principles and language of Dissent?[1] Very far from it. The fact is, John Wesley in his conception of the Church was both before and behind his age. He would have found abundance of sympathisers with his views in the seventeenth, and abundance after the first thirty years of the nineteenth, century. But in the eighteenth century they were quite out of date. Here and there a man like Jones of Nayland or Bishop Horsley[2] might express High Church views of the same kind as those of John Wesley, but they were quite out of harmony with the general spirit of the times. Wesley's idea of the Church was not like that of high and dry Churchmen of his day; that Church which was always 'in danger' was not what he meant; neither was it, like that of the later Evangelical school, the Church of the Reformation period. He went back to far earlier times, and took for his model in doctrine and worship the Primitive Church before its divisions into East and West. Thus we find him recording with evident satisfaction at Christmastide, 1774, 'During the twelve festival days we had the Lord's Supper daily—*a little emblem of the Primitive Church.*'[3] When he first appointed district visitors he looked with great satisfaction upon the arrangement, because it reminded him of the deaconesses of the Primitive Church. In the very act which tended most of all to the separation of Wesley's followers from the Church he was still led—or, as some will think, misled—by his desire to follow in what he conceived to be the steps of the Primitive Church. In 1756 he wrote these remarkable words:—'I still believe the episcopal form of Church government to agree with the practice and writings of the Apostles, but that it is prescribed in Scripture

a correspondent that allegiance to a national church in no way affects allegiance to Christ.—(Letter in answer to Toogood's *Dissent Justified*, 1752. *Works*, x., 503-6.)

[1] See Bogue and Bennett's *History of Dissenters*, vol. i. p. 73.

[2] Bishop Horsley, in his first Charge to the Diocese of St. Davids, 1790, expressly distinguishes between a High Churchman in the sense of 'a bigot to the secular rights of the priesthood,' which he declares he is not, and a High Churchman in the sense of an 'upholder of the spiritual authority of the priesthood,' which he owns that he is, and he adds, 'We are more than mere hired servants of the State or laity.'

[3] To the same effect in 1777.

I do not believe. This opinion, which I once zealously espoused, I have been heartily ashamed of ever since I read Bishop Stillingfleet's "Irenicon." I think he has unanswerably proved that neither Christ nor His Apostles prescribe any particular form of Church government, and that the plea of Divine right for diocesan episcopacy was *never heard of in the Primitive Church.*' His ideas of worship are strictly in accordance with what would now be called High Church usages. He would have no pews, but open benches alike for all; he would have the men and the women separated, *as they were in the Primitive Church;*[1] he would have a hearty congregational service. When it was seasonable to sing praise to God, they were to do it with the spirit and the understanding also; 'not in the miserable, scandalous doggerel of Sternhold and Hopkins, but in psalms and hymns which are both sense and poetry, such as would sooner provoke a critic to turn Christian than a Christian to turn critic;' they were to sing 'not lolling at their ease, or in the indecent posture of sitting, but all standing before God, praising Him lustily and with a good courage;' there was to be 'no repetition of words, no dwelling on disjointed syllables.'[2] Wesley was much struck with the remarkable decorum with which public worship was conducted by the Scotch Episcopal Church, which has always been more inclined to High Church usages than her English sister.[3] The Fasts and Festivals of the Church Wesley desired to observe most scrupulously: every Friday was to be kept as a day of abstinence; the very children at Kingswood school were, if healthy, to fast every Friday till 3 P.M. All Saints' Day was his favourite festival, and he made it his constant practice on that day to preach on the Communion of Saints. He distinctly implies that he considers the celebration of the Holy Communion an essential part of the public service at least on every Lord's Day, and adduces this as a proof that the service at his own meetings must necessarily be imperfect. From his private memoranda, quoted by Mr. Urlin,[4] we find that he believed it to be a duty

[1] So late as 1780 he wrote, 'If I come into any new house, and see men and women together, I will immediately go out.' This was, therefore, no youthful High Church prejudice, which wore off with years.

[2] See Southey's *Life of Wesley*, ii. 85. [3] Id. 101.

[4] *John Wesley's Place in Church History*, by R. Denny Urlin p. 70.

to observe so far as he could the following rules:—(1) to baptize by immersion; (2) to use the mixed chalice; (3) to pray for the faithful departed; (4) to pray standing on the Sunday in Pentecost. He thought it prudent (1) to observe the stations [Wednesday and Friday], (2) to keep Lent and especially Holy Week, (3) to turn to the east at the Creed. It is useless to speculate upon what might have been; but can it be doubted that if John Wesley's lot had been cast in the nineteenth instead of the eighteenth century, he would have found much to fascinate him in another revival, which, like his own, began at Oxford?

It is idle to say that this side of Wesley's character was merely the result of prejudices clinging to him from his early habits and training. For what evidence is there that anything which he saw at Epworth would lead him to these views? The High Churchism of his father and mother was of quite a different type from this. His brother Samuel was simply a worthy and sensible representative of the high and dry school; even his brother Charles, though in one way a far more uncompromising Churchman than John himself, showed few, if any, traces of this kind of Churchmanship. It is surely remarkable that the one man connected with the Evangelical revival who, however reluctantly, was yet, as a matter of fact, the originator of a great and widespread separation from the Church, was also the one man who showed any indications of the same spirit which led to the Church movement of the present century.

But how was it that if John Wesley showed this strong appreciation of the æsthetic and the symbolical in public worship, this desire to bring everything to the model of the Primitive Church, he never impressed these views upon his followers? How is it that so few traces of these predilections are to be found in his printed sermons? John Wesley had so immense an influence over his disciples that he could have led them to almost anything. How was it that he infused into them nothing whatever of that spirit which was in him?[1]

[1] 'Wesley,' writes Mrs. Oliphant, 'was opposed to Rome, yet no society could be more evidently established on the principles of Rome. He visited the prisoners and sick, communicated once a week, and fasted on Wednesday and Friday, stationary days of the ancient Church, because our Saviour was betrayed and crucified on those days, and drew up a scheme of self-examination almost

The answer to these questions is to be found in the fact which, it may be remembered, led to these remarks. There is but one clue to the right understanding of Wesley's career. It is this: that his one great object was to promote the love of God and the love of man for God's sake. Everything must give way to this object of paramount importance. His tastes led him in one direction, but it was a direction in which very few could follow him. Not only was there absolutely nothing congenial to this taste either inside or outside the Church in the eighteenth century, but it would have been simply unintelligible. If he had followed out this taste, he would have been isolated.

Moreover, it is fully admitted that Wesley was essentially a many-sided man. Look at him from another point of view, and he stands in precisely the same attitude in which his contemporaries and successors of the Evangelical school stood—as the *homo unius libri*, referring everything to Scripture, and to Scripture alone. There would be in his mind no inconsistency whatever between the one position and the other; but he felt he could do more practical good by simply standing upon Scriptural ground, and therefore he was quite content to rest there.

It was precisely the same motive which led Wesley to the various separations which, to his sorrow, he was obliged to make from those who had been his fellow-workers. He has been accused of being a quarrelsome man, a man with whom it was not easy to be on good terms.[1] The accusation is unjust. Never was a man more ready to forgive injuries, more ready to own his failings, more firm to his friends, and more patient with his foes.

Nevertheless it is an undoubted fact that he was frequently brought into collision with men whom he would have been the first to own as God's faithful servants—with William Law, with the Moravians, with Whitefield and the Calvinists, and with several of the Evangelical parish clergymen. It also cannot be denied that he showed some abruptness—nay, rudeness—in his communications with some of these.

identical with those of the mystic codes of monastic piety.'—*Historical Sketches of the Reign of George II.*, vol. ii. sketch vii., 'The Reformer.'

[1] See Gledstone's *Life of Whitefield*, p. 465.

But in each and all of these cases the clue to his conduct is still the same; his one desire was to do all the good he could to the souls of men, and to that great object friends, united action, and even common politeness must give way. To come to details. In 1738 he wrote an angry letter, and in 1756 an angry pamphlet, to William Law. Both these effusions were hasty and indiscreet; but, in spite of his indiscretion and discourtesy, it is easy to trace both in the letter and the pamphlet the one motive which actuated him.

Let us look at the facts of the case. In 1738 Wesley experienced a change in his soul, which filled him with a joy in believing and a sense of God's fatherhood to him as a believer, which he had never felt before. He had previously sat at the feet of Law as his Gamaliel; and Law, he thought, had never put him in the way of attaining what, through the instrumentality of Peter Böhler, he had now attained. Turning upon his old teacher, he upbraided him in terms which laid him open to a crushing rejoinder, which an accomplished controversialist like Law was not slow to give. Wesley got more than he gave, and he richly deserved it. But, after all, Wesley's rude letter was the outspoken utterance of an honest heart; he thought he had been misled himself, and he feared that others might also be misled by the same fascinating teacher, and therefore he wrote as he did.[1]

It is the same with the pamphlet of 1756. He thought that Law's treatise on 'The Spirit of Prayer' was inadequate

[1] The letter ran thus:—'Why did I scarcely hear you name the name of Christ; never so as to ground anything upon faith in His blood? If you say you advised other things as preparatory to this, what is this but laying a foundation below the foundation? Is not Christ the first and the last?' And he then goes on to speak of Law's rude behaviour. On this letter Mr. Tyerman, Wesley's honest biographer, remarks, 'To charge William Law with the guilt of Wesley's want of faith, and to accuse him of extremely rough, morose, and sour behaviour, was a deplorable outrage against good manners.'—*Life and Times of J. Wesley*, by the Rev. L. Tyerman, vol. i. p. 188. Law replied, by referring to Thomas à Kempis, which Wesley had translated, and asked very pertinently, 'Did you take upon you to restore the true sense of that divine writer, and instruct others how they might best profit by reading him, before you had so much as a literal knowledge of the most plain, open, and repeated doctrine in his book? You cannot but remember what value I always expressed for à Kempis, and how much I recommended him to your meditation. You have had a good many conversations with me, and I dare say you never was with me for half an hour without my being large upon that very doctrine which you make me totally silent and ignorant of. As to my rough behaviour, &c.—say on.'

and erroneous, and calculated to lead men astray—an opinion in which many who, like the present writer, have the deepest admiration for Law's character and abilities, will still agree. He therefore wrote in reply a pamphlet which Whitefield designated as 'most unchristian and ungentlemanly,' and Law himself as 'a juvenile composition of emptiness and pertness,' 'below the character of any man who had been serious in religion but half a month.' It is not to the present purpose to defend the pamphlet any more than the letter. Law was quite able to take care of himself. Wesley was an able writer, but Law was an abler, and he was far more than a match for Wesley in any purely intellectual dispute. But Wesley's fault, whatever it may have been, was a fault of the head, not of the heart. It is thoroughly characteristic of the generous and forgiving nature of the man that, in spite of their differences, Wesley constantly alluded to Law in his sermons, and always in terms of the warmest commendation.

The same motive which led Wesley to dispute with Law actuated him in his separation from the Moravians. In justice to that exemplary body it must be remembered that they were not well represented in London when Wesley split from them. The mischievous notion that it was contrary to the Gospel for a man to search the Scriptures, to pray, to communicate—in fact, to use any ordinances—before he had faith, that it was his duty simply to sit still and wait till this was given him, would, if it had gained ground, have been absolutely fatal to Wesley's efforts. He could not even tacitly countenance those who held such tenets without grievous hindrance to his work.[1] One is thankful to learn that he resisted his besetting temptation, and did not send to the Herrnhut brethren a rude letter which he had written,[2] and thankful also to find that he did full justice to the good qualities of Count Zinzendorf.[3] But as to his separation from

[1] 'You have often,' said Wesley to the Moravians in Fetter Lane, 'affirmed that to search the Scriptures, to pray, or to communicate before we have faith, is to seek salvation by works, and that till these works are laid aside no man can have faith. I believe these assertions to be flatly contrary to the word of God. I have warned you hereof again and again, and besought you to turn back to the law and to the testimony.'

[2] 'Do you not neglect joint fasting? Is not the Count all in all? Are not the rest mere shadows? . . . Do you not magnify your Church too much?' &c. &c.

[3] 'I labour everywhere to speak consistently with that deep sense which is

the London Moravians, Wesley could not have acted otherwise without seriously damaging the cause which he had at heart.

His dispute with Whitefield will come under our notice in connexion with the Calvinistic controversy, which forms a painfully conspicuous feature in the Evangelical movement. It is sufficient in this place to remark that the Antinomianism which, as a plain matter of fact, admitted even by the Calvinists themselves, did result from the perversion of Calvinism, was, if possible, a more fatal hindrance to Wesley's work than the Moravian stillness itself. This was obviously the ground of Wesley's dislike of Calvinism,[1] but it did not separate him from Calvinists; so far as a separation did ensue the fault did not lie with Wesley.[2]

His misunderstanding with some of the Evangelical clergy of his day arose from the same cause as that which led him into other disputes. An overpowering sense of the paramount importance of the great work which he had to do made him set aside everything which he considered to be an obstacle to that work without the slightest hesitation. Now, much as Wesley loved the Church of England, he never appreciated one of her most marked features, the parochial system. Perhaps under any circumstances such a system would have found little favour in the eyes of one of Wesley's temperament. To a man impatient of immediate results the slowly but surely working influence of a pastor resident in the midst of his flock, preaching to them a silent sermon every day and almost every hour by his example among them, would naturally seem flat, tame, and impalpable when compared with the more showy effects resulting from the rousing preaching of the itinerant. Such a life as that of the parish priest would have been to Wesley himself simply

settled in my heart, that you are (though I cannot call you, Rabbi, infallible, yet) far, far, better and wiser than me.'

[1] And also his strong feeling that the doctrine of reprobation was inconsistent with the love of God. 'I could sooner,' he wrote, 'be a Turk, a Deist—yea, an atheist—than I could believe this. It is less absurd to deny the very existence of a God than to make Him an almighty tyrant.'

[2] 'In March 1741 Mr. Whitefield, being returned to England, entirely separated from Mr. Wesley and his friends, because he did not hold the decrees. Here was the first breach which warm men persuaded Mr. Whitefield to make merely for a difference of opinion. Those who believed universal redemption had no desire to separate,' &c.—Wesley's *Works*, vol. viii. p. 335.

unbearable. Even in the early days of his ministerial life, before he had experienced any of the striking effects which the itinerancy of himself and his fellow-workers could produce, he could not be induced to undertake the care of a parish even by the strongest motives which could be offered to a man of his devoted family affection—the prospect of keeping an honoured mother and three much-loved sisters from poverty. The inactivity of many of the parochial clergy of his day confirmed Wesley's belief in the enervating effects of residence in one place. He was of opinion—surely a most erroneous opinion—that if he were confined to one spot he should preach himself and his whole congregation to sleep in a twelvemonth. He never estimated at its proper value the real, solid work which others were doing in their respective parishes. He bitterly regretted that Fletcher would persist in wasting his sweetness on the desert air of Madeley. He had little faith in the permanency of the good which the apostolic Walker was doing at Truro. Much as he esteemed Venn of Huddersfield, he could not be content to leave the parish in his hands.[1] He expressed himself very strongly to Adams of Winteringham on the futility of his work in his parish. He utterly rejected Walker's advice that he should induce some of his itinerant preachers to be ordained and to settle in country parishes. He thought that this would not only narrow their sphere of usefulness, but also cripple their energies even in that contracted sphere. Mistaken as we may believe him to have been in these opinions, we cannot doubt his thorough sincerity. In the slight collision into which he was necessarily brought with the Evangelical clergy by acting upon these views he was actuated by no vulgar desire to make himself a name by encroaching upon other men's

[1] It is only fair to Wesley to give his own account of the matter. 'Several years,' he writes, 'before Mr. Venn came to Huddersfield some of our preachers went thither, carrying their lives in their hands, and with great difficulty established a little earnest society. These eagerly desire them to preach to them still, not in opposition to Mr. Venn (whom they love, esteem, and constantly attend), but to supply what they do not find in his preaching. It is a tender point. Where there is a Gospel ministry already we do not desire to preach; but whether we can leave off preaching because such an one comes after is another question.' The matter was settled amicably; it was agreed that the itinerants should come once a month.

labours, but solely by the conviction that he must do the work of God in the best way he could, no matter whom he might offend or alienate by so doing. When James Harvey expostulated with him on his irregularity, and advised him either to settle in College or accept a cure of souls, he replied in language which sounds strangely inconsistent with the High Church views which he at other times expressed. 'You think,' he wrote, 'that I ought to be still, because otherwise I should invade another's office; you ask how it is I assemble Christians who are none of my charge to sing psalms, and pray, and hear Scripture expounded; and you think it hard to justify doing this in other men's parishes on catholic principles. Permit me to speak plainly. If by catholic principles you mean any other than Scriptural, they weigh nothing with me. I allow no other rule, whether of faith or practice, than Holy Scripture.'[1] Order and regularity were good things in their way, but better do the work of God irregularly than let it be half done or undone in the regular way.[2] He predicted that even the earnest parochial clergy of his day would prove a mere rope of sand—a prophecy which subsequent events will scarcely endorse.

Not that John Wesley ever desired to upset the parochial system. From first to last he consistently maintained his position that his work was not to supplant but to supplement the ordinary work of the Church. This supplementary agency formed so important a factor in the Evangelical revival, and its arrangement was so characteristic of John Wesley, that a few words on the subject seem necessary. It would fill too much space to describe in detail the constitution of the first Methodist societies. Except in one very important point—their relation to the National Church—they differed but little, if at all, from those which now exist. It is now purposed to consider them simply in their relation to their founder. The most superficial sketch of the life and character of John Wesley would be imperfect if it did not

[1] Southey's *Life of Wesley*, i. 174.

[2] 'If there be a law,' he wrote in 1761, 'that a minister of Chirst who is not suffered to preach the Gospel in church should not preach it elsewhere, or a law that forbids Christian people to hear the Gospel of Christ out of their parish church when they cannot hear it therein, I judge that law to be absolutely sinful, and that it is sinful to obey it.'

touch upon this subject; for, after all, it is as the founder, and organiser, and ruler of these societies that John Wesley is best known. There were connected with the Evangelical revival other writers as able, other preachers as effective, other workers as indefatigable, as he was; but there were none who displayed anything like the administrative talent that he did. From first to last Wesley held over this large and ever-increasing agency an absolute supremacy. His word was literally law, and that law extended not only to strictly religious matters, but to the minutest details of daily life. It is most amusing to read his letters to his itinerant preachers, whom he addresses in the most familiar terms. 'Dear Tommy' is told that he is never to sit up later than ten. In general he (Mr. Wesley) desires him to go to bed about a quarter after nine.[1] 'Dear Sammy' is reminded, 'You are called to obey *me* as a son in the Gospel. But who can prove that you are so called to obey any other person?' Another helper is admonished, 'Scream no more, at the peril of your soul. Speak with all your heart, but with a moderate voice. It is said of our Lord, "He shall not cry"—literally, scream.' The helpers generally are commanded 'not to affect the gentleman. You have no more to do with this character than with that of a dancing-master.' And again, 'Do not mend our rules, but keep them,' with much more to the same effect. His preachers in Ireland are instructed how they are to avoid falling into the dirty habits of the country, and the most minute and delicate rules about personal cleanliness are laid down for them.

The congregations are ruled in almost the same lordly fashion as the preachers. Of a certain congregation at Norwich Wesley writes, 'I told them in plain terms that they were the most ignorant, self-conceited, self-willed, fickle, untractable, disorderly, disjointed society that I knew in the three kingdoms. And God applied it to their hearts, so that many were profited, but I do not find that one was offended.'[2] At one time he had an idea that tea was expensive and unwholesome, and his people are commanded to abstain from the deleterious beverage, and so to 'keep from sickness and pay their debts.' 'Many,' he writes, 'tell me to my face I

[1] See Tyerman's *Life of Wesley*, ii. 545. [2] Id. 334.

can persuade this people to anything;' so he tried to persuade them to this. In the same year (1746) he determines to physic them all. 'I thought,' he says, 'of a kind of desperate experiment. I will prepare and give them physic myself.' This indefatigable man provided for their minds as well as for their souls and bodies. He furnished them with a 'Christian library,' writing, abridging, and condensing many books himself, and recommending and editing others; and few, probably, of the early Methodists read anything else.

As to the Conference, Wesley clearly gave its members to understand that his autocracy was to be in no way limited by their action. '*They* did not,' he writes, 'desire the meeting, but *I* did, knowing that in the multitude of counsellors there is safety. But,' he adds significantly, 'I sent for them to advise, not to govern me. Neither did I at any of those times divest myself of any part of that power which the providence of God cast upon me without any desire or design of mine. What is that power? It is a power of admitting into and excluding from the societies under my care; of choosing and removing stewards, of receiving or not receiving helpers; of appointing them where, when, and how to help me, and of desiring any of them to meet me when I see good.'[1] They never dreamt of disobeying him. So great was the awe which he inspired that when the Deed of Declaration was drawn up in 1784, and Wesley selected, somewhat arbitrarily, one hundred out of one hundred and ninety-two preachers to be members of the Conference, though several murmured and thought it hard that preachers of old standing should be rejected, yet when the time came none durst oppose him. 'Many,' writes one of the malcontents, 'were averse to the deed, but had not the courage to avow their sentiments in Conference. Mr. Wesley made a speech and

[1] Southey, ii. 71. In 1780 Wesley wrote, 'You seem not to have well considered the rules of a helper or the rise of Methodism. It pleased God by me to awaken first my brother, then a few others, who severally desired of me as a favour to direct them in all things. I drew up a few plain rules (observe there was no Conference in being) and permitted them to join me on these conditions. Whoever, therefore, violates these conditions does *ipso facto* disjoin himself from me. This Brother Macnab has done, but he cannot see that he has done amiss. The Conference has no power at all but what I exercise through them' (the preachers).

invited all who were of his mind to stand up. They all rose to a man.'[1]

It certainly was an extraordinary power for one man to possess; but in its exercise there was not the slightest taint of selfishness, nor yet the slightest trace that he loved power for power's sake. His own account of its rise is perfectly sincere and artless, and, it is honestly believed, perfectly true. 'The power I have,' he writes, 'I never sought; it was the unadvised, unexpected result of the work which God was pleased to work by me. I therefore suffer it till I can find some one to ease me of my burthen.' He used his power simply to promote his one great object—to make his followers better men and better citizens, happier in this life and thrice happier in the life to come. If it was a despotism it was a singularly useful and benevolent despotism, a despotism which was founded wholly and solely upon the respect which his personal character commanded. Surely if this man had been, as his ablest biographer represents him,[2] an ambitious man, he would have used his power for some personal end. He would at least have yielded to the evident desire of some of his followers and have founded a separate sect, in which he might have held a place not much inferior to that which Mahomet held among the faithful. But he spoke the truth when he said, 'So far as I know myself, I have no more concern for the reputation of Methodism than for the reputation of Prester John.'[3] When he heard of accusations being brought against him of 'shackling free-born Englishmen' and of 'doing no less than making himself a Pope,' he defended his power with an artless simplicity which was very characteristic of the man. 'If,' he said, 'you mean by arbitrary power a power which I exercise singly, without any colleague therein, this is certainly true; but I see no harm in it. Arbitrary in this sense is a very harmless word. I bear this burden merely for your sakes.' It is a defence which one could fancy an Eastern tyrant making for the most rigorous of 'paternal governments.' But Wesley was no tyrant; he had no selfish end in view; it was literally 'for their sakes' that he ruled as he did; and

[1] Letter of Mr. J. Hampson, jun., quoted by Rev. L. Tyerman, *Life of Wesley*, vol. iii. p. 423.

[2] Robert Southey, *passim*.

[3] In a letter to Mr. Walker, of Truro, 1756.

since he was infinitely superior to the mass of his subjects (one can use no weaker term) in point of education, learning, and good judgment, it was to their advantage that he did so.

At any rate a Churchman may be pardoned for thinking this, for one effect of his unbounded influence was to prevent his followers from separating from the Church. His sentiments on this point were so constantly and so emphatically expressed that the only difficulty consists in selecting the most suitable specimens. Perhaps the best plan will be to quote a few passages in chronological order, written at different periods of his life, to show how unalterable his opinions were on this point, however much he might alter them in others. At the very first Conference—in 1744, only six years after his conversion—we find him declaring (for of course the dicta of Conference were simply his own dicta), 'We believe the body of our hearers will even after our death remain in the Church, unless they are thrust out. They will either be thrust out or leaven the Church.' A few years later, 'In visiting classes ask everyone, "Do you go to church as often as you did?" Set the example and immediately alter any plan that interfereth therewith. Are we not unawares, by little and little, tending to a separation from the Church? Oh, remove every tendency thereto with all diligence. Receive the Sacrament at every opportunity. Warn all against niceness in hearing, a great and prevailing evil; against calling our society a Church or the Church; against calling our preachers ministers and our houses meeting-houses: call them plain preaching-houses. Do not license yourself till you are constrained, and then not as a Dissenter but as a Methodist preacher.' In 1766, 'We will not, we dare not, separate from the Church, for the reasons given several years ago. We are not seceders. . . . Some may say, "Our own service is public worship." Yes in a sense, but not such as to supersede the Church service. We never designed it should. If it were designed to be instead of the Church service it would be essentially defective, for it seldom has the four grand parts of public prayer—deprecation, petition, intercession, and thanksgiving. Neither is it, even on the Lord's Day, concluded with the Lord's Supper. If the people put ours in the place of the Church service, we *hurt* them that stay with us and

ruin them that leave us.' In 1768, 'We are, in truth, so far from being enemies to the Church that we are rather bigots to it. I dare not, like Mr. Venn, leave the parish church where I am, and go to an Independent meeting. I advise all over whom I have any influence to keep to the Church.' In 1777, in the remarkable sermon which he preached on laying the foundation of the City Road Chapel, after having given a succinct but graphic account of the rise and progress of Methodism, he alludes to 'one circumstance attending the present revival of religion which, I apprehend, is quite peculiar to it. It cannot be denied that there have been several considerable revivals of religion in England since the Reformation. But the generality of the English nation were little profited thereby, because they that were the subjects of those revivals, preachers as well as people, soon separated from the Established Church and formed themselves into a distinct sect. So did the Presbyterians first; afterwards the Independents, the Anabaptists, and the Quakers; and after this was done, they did scarce any good, except to their own little body. . . . But it is not so in the present revival of religion. The Methodists (so termed) know their calling. . . . Their fixed purpose is, let the clergy or laity use them well or ill, by the grace of God, to endure all things, to hold on their even course, and to continue in the Church, maugre men or devils, unless God permits them to be thrust out.' He then contrasts the conduct of his own followers with those of Mr. Ingham, Mr. Whitefield ('who conversed much with Dissenters and contracted strong prejudices against the Church'), Mr. W. Cudworth, Mr. Maxfield, and 'lastly a school set up near Trevecka, where all who were educated (except those that were ordained, and some of them too), as they disclaimed all connection with the Methodists, so they disclaimed the Church also; nay, they spoke of it upon all occasions with exquisite bitterness and contempt.' In contrast with all these, 'none of whom have any manner of connection with the original Methodists,' 'we,' he concludes, 'do not, will not, form any separate sect, but from principle remain, what we have always been, true members of the Church of England.'[1] In 1778,

[1] To the same effect in his *Short History of Methodism* Wesley wrote, 'Those who remain with Mr. Wesley are mostly Church of England men. They love

'To speak freely, I myself find more life in the Church prayers than in any formal extempore prayers of Dissenters.' In 1780, 'Having had opportunity of seeing several Churches abroad, and having deeply considered the several sorts of Dissenters at home, I am fully convinced our own Church, with all her blemishes, is nearer the Scriptural plan than any other Church in Europe.' In 1783, 'In every possible way I have advised the Methodists to keep to the Church. They that do this most prosper best in their souls. I have observed it long. If ever the Methodists in general leave the Church, I must leave them.' In 1786, 'Wherever there is any Church service I do not approve of any appointment the same hour, because I love the Church of England, and would assist, not oppose it, all I can.' In 1788, 'Still, the more I reflect the more I am convinced that the Methodists ought not to leave the Church. I judge that to lose a thousand—yea, ten thousand—of our people would be a less evil than this. "But many had much comfort in this." So they would in any *new thing*. I believe Satan himself would give them comfort therein, for he knows what the end must be. Our glory has hitherto been not to be a separate body. "*Hoc Ithacus velit.*"' And finally, within two years of his death, in his striking sermon on the ministerial office, 'In God's name stop! . . . Ye are a new phenomenon in the earth—a body of people who, being of no sect or party, are friends to all parties, and endeavour to forward all in heart-religion, in the knowledge and love of God and man. Ye yourselves were at first called in the Church of England; and though ye have and will have a thousand temptations to leave it, and set up for yourselves, regard them not; be Church of England men still; do not cast away the peculiar glory which God hath put upon you and frustrate the design of Providence, the very end for which God raised you up.'[1]

her articles, her homilies, her liturgy, her discipline, and unwillingly vary from it in any instance.'

[1] It seems difficult to conceive how in the face of such passages as these (which might be multiplied almost indefinitely) Mr. Buckle could describe Methodism as 'bearing the same relation to the Church of England that the Church of England bore to the Church of Rome in the sixteenth century;' and again, 'It is evident that this great schismatic [Wesley!] had larger views than any of his predecessors, and that he wished to organise a system capable of

But some years before John Wesley uttered these memorable words had he not himself done the very thing which he deprecated? Consciously and intentionally, No! a thousand times no; but virtually and as a matter of fact we must reluctantly answer, Yes. Lord Mansfield's famous dictum, 'Ordination is separation,' is unanswerable. When, in 1784, John Wesley ordained Coke and Asbury to be 'superintendents,' and Whatcoat and Vasey to be 'elders,' in America, he to all intents and purposes crossed the Rubicon. His brother Charles regarded the act in that light and bitterly regretted it. How a logical mind like John Wesley's could regard it in any other it is difficult to conceive. But that he had in all sincerity persuaded himself that there was no inconsistency in it with his strong Churchmanship there can be no manner of doubt. Bishop Stillingfleet's 'Irenicon' had convinced him that no particular form of Church government was prescribed in Holy Scripture; Lord King's 'Enquiry into the Constitution of the Primitive Church' had proved to him that 'bishops and presbyters were essentially of one order, and that originally every Christian congregation was a Church independent of all others.' And so he wrote to his brother in 1780, 'I verily believe I have as good a right to ordain as to administer the Lord's Supper.' And when he had acted upon this belief he wrote, 'These steps—not of choice, but of necessity, I have slowly and deliberately taken. If any one is pleased to call this separating from the Church, he may. But the law of England does not call it so; nor can any one properly be said to do so unless, out of conscience, he refuses to join in the service and partake of the sacraments administered therein.'

The true explanation of John Wesley's conduct in this matter may perhaps be found in the intensely practical character of his mind. His work in America seemed likely to come to a dead lock for want of ordained ministers.[1] Thus

rivalling the Established Church.'—*History of Civilisation*, vol. i., General Introduction, pp. 385 and 387, note.

[1] 'Let any one,' writes Mr. Curteis, 'read Wilberforce's *History of the American Church* (p. 137, &c.), and he will find it absolutely impossible to speak another harsh word of Wesley's irregular proceedings in 1784.'—*Dissent in its Relation to the Church of England, Bampton Lectures* for 1871, Lect. vii. p. 378.

we come back to the old motive. Everything must be sacrificed for the sake of his work. Some may think this was doing evil that good might come; but no such notion ever entered into John Wesley's head; his rectitude of purpose, if not the clearness of his judgment, is as conspicuous in this as in the other acts of his life.

It should also be remembered (for it serves to explain this, as well as many other apparent inconsistencies in his career) that Wesley attached very little value to the mere holding of right opinions. Orthodoxy, he thought, constituted but a very small part, if a part at all, of true religion. 'What,' he asks, 'is faith? Not an opinion nor any number of opinions, be they ever so true. A string of opinions is no more Christian faith than a string of beads is Christian holiness.' Opinions were 'feathers light as air, trifles not worth naming.' Controversy was his abhorrence; he thought 'God made practical divinity necessary, but the Devil controversial.' When he entered into controversy with Tucker in 1742, 'I now,' he wrote, 'tread an untried path with fear and trembling—fear not of my adversary, but of myself.' Just twenty years later he records with evident satisfaction that he has entirely lost his taste for controversy and his readiness in disputing, and this he takes to be a providential discharge from it. 'I am sick,' he writes on another occasion, 'of opinions; I am weary to bear them; my soul loathes this frothy food. Give me solid, substantial religion. Give me an humble, gentle lover of God and man. Whosoever thus doeth the will of my Father which is in Heaven, the same is brother, and sister, and mother.' He was anxious to promote a union between all the Evangelical clergy, but it must be on the condition that the points of difference between them should not be discussed. 'I have received,' he writes to

Dr. Wilberforce, however, thinks that Wesley, 'enfeebled by the weight of fourscore and two years,' was over-persuaded, and that 'the reasons given by him for this step bear no marks of his vigorous understanding.'—See *History of the American Church*, ch. v. pp. 178–180.

Mr. Anderson condemns Wesley far more severely, but he too thinks that 'the pretext for creating the schism would have been removed had the unjust policy of denying bishops to colonial Churches not been pursued.'—*History of the Colonial Church*, vol. iii. ch. xxx. p. 518. See Jones of Nayland's 'Life of Bishop Horne,' vol. i. of Horne's *Works*, p. 162.

Lady Huntingdon in 1764, 'an exceeding friendly letter from Mr. Hart, testifying a great desire of union among preachers of the Gospel; only he carries the point considerably further than I do, proposing a free debate concerning our several opinions. Now this, I fear, we are not able to bear. I fear it might occasion some sharpness of expression, if not of spirit too, which might tear open wounds before they are fully closed. I am far from being assured that I could bear it myself, and perhaps others might be as weak as I. . . . I own freely I am sick of disputing; my whole soul cries out, Peace, peace, at least with the children of God.'[1] To these sentiments he fully acted up. He was quite ready to hand over his opponents to Fletcher, or Sellon, or Olivers, or anyone whom he judged strong enough to take them in hand. He prided himself on the fact that 'Methodism' required no agreement on disputed points of doctrine among its members. 'Are you in earnest about your soul?' That was the one question that must be answered in the affirmative. 'Is thine heart right, as my heart is with thy heart? If so, then give me thine hand.' Or, as he elsewhere expresses it, 'The sum is, One thing I know: whereas I was blind, now I see—an argument of which a peasant, a woman, a child, may feel all the force.'[2]

This almost supercilious disregard of mere orthodoxy was all very well in Wesley's days, but it would never have done in the earlier part of the century; for it tacitly assumed that the main truths of Christianity had been firmly established; and the assumption was justifiable. The work of the apologists had prepared the way for the work of the practical reformer. If the former had not done their work, the latter could not have afforded to think so lightly as he did of sound doctrine.

Feeling thus that opinions were a matter of quite secondary consideration, Wesley had no hesitation about modifying, or even totally abandoning, opinions which he found to be practically injurious.[3] He confessed, as we have seen, that he was quite wrong in his theory of the Divine origin of episcopacy, and in his estimate of his own state of mind previous to his

[1] Tyerman, ii. 509. [2] See also Wesley's *Works*, vol. xii. p. 446, &c.

[3] For this reason, among others, not much has been said in this sketch about Wesley's opinions, because they were different at different stages of his life.

conversion in 1738. He very materially modified his doctrine of Christian perfection when he found that it was liable to practical abuse, and appended notes to an edition of hymns in which that doctrine was too unguardedly stated.[1] He confessed his error on the subject of Christian assurance in a characteristically outspoken fashion. 'When,' he wrote in old age, 'fifty years ago, my brother Charles and I, in the simplicity of our hearts, taught the people that unless they *knew* their sins were forgiven they were under the wrath and curse of God, I marvel they did not stone us. The Methodists, I hope, know better now. We preach assurance, as we always did, as a common privilege of the children of God, but we do not enforce it under pain of damnation denounced on all who enjoy it not.' He thought it idle to discuss the question of regeneration in baptism when it was obvious that baptized persons had practically as much need as heathens to be born again.[2] It was quite as much their fondness for controversy as their rigid Calvinism which put him out of love with the Scotch and made him feel that he could do no good among them.[3]

In accounting for Wesley's repugnance to religious controversy it should not be forgotten that in the latter half of his life controversial divinity had sunk to a low ebb, at least

Moreover, though Wesley was an able man and a well-read man, and could write in admirably lucid and racy language, he can by no means be ranked among theologians of the first order. He could never, for instance, have met Dr. Clarke, as Waterland did; or, to compare him with one who was brought into contact with him, he could never have written the *Serious Call*, nor have answered Tindal, as Law did.

[1] 'I retract several expressions in our hymns which imply impossibility of falling from perfection; I do not contend for the term "sinless," though I do not object against it.' And in a sermon on the text, 'In many things we offend all,' 'We are all liable to be mistaken, both in speculation and practice,' &c. 'Christian perfection certainly does admit of degrees,' &c.

[2] But, as a staunch Churchman, he agreed with the Baptismal Service. In his *Treatise on Baptism* he writes, 'Regeneration, which our Church in so many places ascribes to baptism, is more than barely being admitted into the Church. By water we are regenerated or born again; a principle of grace is infused which will not be wholly taken away unless we quench the Spirit of God by long-continued wickedness.' The same sentiments are expressed in his sermon on the 'New Birth.'

[3] See *inter alia*, T. Somerville's *My own Life and Times* (1741–1841). 'He [J. Wesley] had attended, he told me, some of the most interesting debates at the General Assembly, which he liked "very ill indeed," saying there was too much heat, &c. p. 253-4.

among those with whom he would most naturally come into contact. A man of his logical mind, clear common sense, and extensive reading could hardly fail to be disgusted with much that passed for religious literature. He shrunk with a horror which is almost amusing from the task of reviewing religious publications in the 'Arminian Magazine.' 'I would not,' he said, 'read all the religious books that are now published for the whole world.' He protested against 'what were vulgarly called Gospel sermons.' 'The term,' he says, 'has now become a mere cant word. I wish none of our Society would use it. It has no determinate meaning. Let but a pert, self-sufficient animal that has neither sense nor grace bawl out something about Christ or His blood, or justification by faith, and his hearers cry out, "What a fine Gospel sermon!"'[1]

In fact, Wesley in his later years was very much alienated from what was called 'the religious world.' He had received some of his severest wounds in the house of his friends. Not Warburton, nor Lavington, nor Gibson had spoken and written such hard things against him as many of the most decidedly Evangelical clergy. He clung to the poor and unlettered, not, as it has been asserted, because he desired to be a sort of Pope among them, but because he really felt that his work was there less hampered by the disturbing influence of conflicting opinions, which were barren of practical effects upon the life. As usual, he made no secret whatever of his preference. A nobleman accustomed to flattery on all sides must have been rather taken aback on the receipt of this very outspoken rebuff from plain John Wesley: 'To speak the rough truth, I do not desire any intercourse with any persons of quality in England. They can do me no good, and I fear I can do none to them.'[2] One can fancy the amazement of Lady Huntingdon, who exacted and received no small amount of homage from her protégés, when she received a letter from John Wesley so different from those which were usually addressed to her. 'My Lady, for a considerable time I have had it in my mind to write a few lines to your ladyship, though I cannot learn that your ladyship has ever enquired whether I was living or dead. By the mercy of God I am still alive and following the work to which He has called me, although

[1] See Tyerman, iii. 278. [2] Southey, i. 301, &c.

without any help, even in the most trying times, from those I might have expected it from. Their voice seemed to be rather, *Down with him! down, even to the ground!* I mean (for I use no ceremony or circumlocution) Mr. Madan, Haweis, Berridge, and (I am sorry to say) Whitefield.' Had it been to an earl instead of a countess the letter would probably have been rougher still; but John Wesley was a thorough gentleman in every sense of the word, and could not insult a female—only if the female had been plain Sarah Ryan instead of Selina, Countess of Huntingdon, she would have had more chance of being treated with deference; for Wesley positively disliked the rich and noble. 'In most genteel religious people,' he said, 'there is so strange a mixture that I have seldom much confidence in them. But I love the poor; in many of them I find pure, genuine grace, unmixed with paint, folly, and affectation.' And again, ''Tis well a few of the rich and noble are called. May God increase the number. But I should rejoice, were it the will of God, if it were done by the ministry of others. If I might choose, I would still, as hitherto, preach the Gospel to the poor.' He had the lowest opinion both of the intellectual and moral character of the higher classes. 'Oh! how hard it is,' he once exclaimed, 'to be shallow enough for a polite audience!' And on another occasion he records with some bitterness of a rich congregation to which he had preached at Whitehaven, 'They all behaved with as much decency as if they had been colliers.' 'I have found,' he says again, 'some of the uneducated poor who have exquisite taste and sentiment, and many, very many, of the rich who have scarcely any at all.' He wrote to Fletcher, in what one must call an unprovoked strain of rudeness, on the danger of his conversing with the 'genteel Methodists.' Indeed, the leading members of the Evangelical school—Lady Huntingdon, Sir Richard and Rowland Hill, Venn, Romaine, and others—were, quite apart from their Calvinism, never cordially in harmony with John Wesley. As years went on Wesley must have felt himself more and more a lonely man so far as his equals were concerned, for in point of breeding and culture he was fully the equal of the very best. It must not be supposed that Wesley did not feel this isolation. There is a sadness about

the strain in which he wrote to Benson in 1770. 'Whatever I say, it will be all one. They will find fault because I say it. There is implicit envy at my power (so called) and jealousy therefrom.' Wesley was not demonstrative, but he was a man of strong affections and acute feelings, and he felt his loneliness, and more so than ever after the death of his brother Charles. There is a touching story [1] that a fortnight after the death of the latter Wesley was giving out in chapel his dead brother's magnificent hymn,

Come, O thou traveller unknown,

and when he came to the lines,

My company before is gone,
And I am left alone with thee,

the grand old man (then in his eighty-fourth year) burst into tears and hid his face in his hands.

One feature in Wesley's character must be carefully noted by all who would form a fair estimate of him. If it was a weakness, and one which frequently led him into serious practical mistakes, it was at any rate an amiable weakness—a fault which was very near akin to a virtue. A guileless trustfulness of his fellow-men, who often proved very unworthy of his confidence, and, akin to this, a credulity, a readiness to believe the marvellous, tinged his whole career. 'My brother,' said Charles Wesley, 'was, I think, born for the benefit of knaves.' [2] It is in the light of this quality that we must interpret many important events of his life. His relations with the other sex were notoriously unfortunate; not a breath of scandal was ever uttered against him; and the mere fact that it was not is a convincing proof, if any were needed, of the spotless purity of his life; for it is difficult to conceive conduct more injudicious than his was. The story of his relationship with Sophia Causton, Grace Murray, Sarah Ryan, and last, but not least, the widow Vazeille, his termagant wife, need not here be repeated. In the case of any other man scandal would often have been busy; but Wesley was above suspicion. His conduct was put down to the right

[1] See Tyerman, iii. 527.

[2] So said Charles (see Jackson's *Life of C. Wesley*). John, however, gave a different account. 'My brother,' he said to John Pawson, 'suspects everybody, and he is continually imposed upon; but I suspect nobody, and I am never imposed upon.'

cause—viz. a perfect guilelessness and simplicity of nature. The same tone of mind led him to take men as well as women too much at their own estimates. He was quite ready to believe those who said that they had attained the summit of Christian perfection,[1] though, with characteristic humility, he never professed to have attained it himself. He was far more ready than either his brother Charles or Whitefield to see in the physical symptoms which attended the early movement of Methodism the hand of God; but, in justice to him, it should be added that he was no less ready than they were to check them when in any case he was convinced of their imposture. The same spirit led him to attribute to the immediate interposition of Providence events which might have been more reasonably attributed to ordinary causes; this laid him open to the merciless attacks of Bishops Lavington and Warburton. The same spirit led him to the superstitious and objectionable practice of having recourse to the 'Sortes Biblicæ,' by which folly he was more than once misled against his own better judgment; the same spirit tempted him to lend far too eager an ear to tales of witchcraft and magic.[2]

But, after all, these weaknesses detract but little from the greatness and nothing from the goodness of John Wesley. He stands pre-eminent among the worthies who originated and conducted the revival of practical religion which took place in the last century. In particular points he was surpassed by one or other of his fellow-workers. In preaching power he was not equal to Whitefield; in saintliness of character he was surpassed by Fletcher; in poetical talent he was inferior to his brother; in solid learning he was, perhaps, not equal to his friend and disciple Adam Clarke. But no one man combined *all* these characteristics in so remarkable a degree as John Wesley; and he possessed others besides

[1] 'I seldom,' he wrote to Fletcher in 1768, 'find it profitable for *me* to converse with any who are not athirst for perfection and big with the earnest expectation of receiving it every moment.'—Tyerman, iii. 4.

[2] 'With my latest breath will I bear testimony against giving up to infidels one great proof of the unseen world; I mean that of witchcraft and apparitions, confirmed by the testimony of all ages.'—Id. 11. See also T. Somerville's *My own Life and Times*, p. 254. 'On my asking him if he had seen Farmer's *Essays on Demoniacs*, then recently published, I recollect his answer was, 'Nay, sir, I shall never open that book. Why should a man attend to arguments against possessions of the Devil, who has seen so many of them as I have?'

these which were all his own. He was a born ruler of men; the powers which under different conditions would have made him 'a heaven-born statesman' he dedicated to still nobler and more useful purposes. The good which he did among the poor, whom he loved, is simply incalculable; and his long life, which was almost commensurate with the century, enabled him to see the fruits of his labours. Among the poor at least he was always appreciated at his full worth. And one is thankful to find that towards the end of his life his character began to be better understood and respected by worthy men who could not entirely identify themselves with the Evangelical movement. There is a pleasing story that Wesley met Bishop Lowth at dinner in 1777, when the learned Bishop refused to sit above Wesley at table, saying, 'Mr. Wesley, may I be found sitting at your feet in another world.' When Wesley declined to take precedence the Bishop asked him as a favour to sit above him, as he was deaf and desired not to lose a sentence of Mr. Wesley's conversation. Wesley, though, as we have seen, he had no partiality for the great, fully appreciated this courtesy, and recorded in his journal, 'Dined with Lowth, Bishop of London. His whole behaviour was worthy of a Christian bishop—easy, affable, and courteous—and yet all his conversation spoke the dignity which was suitable to his character.'[1] In 1782, at Exeter, Wesley dined with the Bishop in his palace, five other clergy being present.[2] In 1784, at Whitehaven, Wesley had all the Church ministers to hear him, and most of the gentry of the town.[3]

Still to the last Wesley had the mortification of seeing his work occasionally thwarted by that Church which he loved so dearly. One of the last letters which he wrote was a manly appeal to the Bishop of Lincoln, which is worth quoting in full. 'My Lord, I am a dying man, having already one foot in the

[1] Tyerman, iii. 252. It should not be forgotten that at the beginning as well as at the end of their career the Wesleys met with great consideration from some of the bishops. Charles Wesley speaks in the very highest terms of the 'affectionate' way in which Archbishop Potter treated him and his brother, and John seems never to have forgotten the advice which this 'great and good man' (as he calls him) gave him—'not to spend his time and strength in disputing about things of a disputable nature, but in testifying against open vice and promoting real holiness.' [2] Id. 384. [3] Id. 411.

grave. Humanly speaking, I cannot creep long on earth, being now nearer ninety than eighty. But I cannot die in peace before I have discharged this office of love to your lordship. I write without ceremony, as neither hoping nor fearing anything from your lordship or any man living. And I ask, in the name and presence of Him to whom both you and I are shortly to give an account, why do you trouble those that are quiet in the land, those that fear God and work righteousness? Does your lordship know what the Methodists are? that many thousands of them are zealous members of the Church of England, and strongly attached not only to his Majesty but to the present Ministry? Why should your lordship, setting religion out of the question, throw away such a body of respectable friends? Is it for their religious sentiments? Alas! my lord, is this a time to persecute any man for conscience sake? I beseech you, my lord, do as you would be done to. You are a man of sense; you are a man of learning; nay, I verily believe (what is of infinitely more value) you are a man of piety. Then think and let think. I pray God to bless you with His choicest blessings.'[1]

Within a few months the noble old man who uttered this touching protest was at rest from his labours. When the clergyman who officiated at his funeral came to the words, 'Forasmuch as it hath pleased Almighty God to take unto Himself the soul of our dear *brother* here departed,' he substituted the word 'father' for 'brother,' and the vast multitude burst into tears. It remained for the present generation to do justice to his memory by giving a place in our Christian Walhalla among the great dead to one who was certainly among the greatest of his day.[2]

The next great leader of the early Evangelical movement who claims our attention is *George Whitefield* (1714–1770). Whitefield, like Wesley, appears from first to last to have been actuated by one pure and disinterested motive—the desire to do as much good as he could in the world, and to bring

[1] Southey, ii. 272.

[2] Mr. Curteis (*Bampton Lectures* for 1871, p. 382) calls Wesley 'the purest, noblest, most saintly clergyman of the eighteenth century, whose whole life was passed in the sincere and loyal effort to do good.'

as many souls as possible into the Redeemer's kingdom. But, except in this one grand point of resemblance, before which all points of difference sink into insignificance, it would be difficult to conceive two men whose characters and training were more different than those of Wesley and Whitefield.[1] Wesley was a man of clear, calm, logical mind; Whitefield was the child of impulse. Wesley was endowed by nature with indomitable courage; Whitefield was naturally a timid man. Wesley had all the advantages which the early training of an excellent father and mother, and the companionship of brothers and sisters, all above the average in point of intelligence and culture, could give. From his earliest years he had breathed an atmosphere full of piety and good sense and sterling worth; and when he grew to man's estate he had the inestimable benefit of a long residence at the University, where he was brought into daily contact with his equals and superiors, and where in training the minds of others he had the opportunity of training his own as well. Poor Whitefield had none of these advantages. He lost his father at a very early age; and his mother, though she was not deficient in affection, and was always treated with great deference by her son, yet presents as great a contrast as one can well conceive to the strong-minded, refined, and pious mother of the Wesleys. Instead of the calm and cultured retirement of Epworth Rectory, Whitefield was brought up amidst the vulgar bustle of a country town inn. His position was not very much improved when he exchanged the drawer's apron at the 'Bell Inn,' Gloucester, for the degrading badge of a servitor at Pembroke College, Oxford. After two or three years' experience in this scarcely less menial capacity than that which he had filled at home, he was at once launched into the sea of life, and found himself, at the age of twenty-two, with hardly any intellectual or moral discipline, without having acquired any taste for study, without having ever had the benefit of associating on anything like terms of equality with men of intellect or refinement, suddenly elevated to a degree of notoriety which few have attained. Scarcely one

[1] This passage on the contrast between Wesley and Whitefield was written before the author had read Tyerman's *Life of Whitefield*; a similar contrast will be found in that work, vol. i. p. 12.

man in a thousand could have passed through such a transformation without being spoiled. But Whitefield's was too noble a spirit to be easily spoiled. Nature had given him a loving, generous, unselfish disposition, and Divine grace had sanctified and elevated his naturally amiable qualities and given him others which nature can never bestow. He went forth into the world filled with one burning desire—the desire of doing good to his fellow-men and of extending the kingdom of his Divine Master.

It is needless here to repeat the story of the marvellous effects produced by his preaching. Nothing like it had ever been seen in England before. Ten thousand—twenty thousand—hearers hung breathless upon the preacher's words. Rough colliers, who had been a terror to their neighbourhood, wept until the tears made white gutters down their cheeks—black as they came from the colliery—and, what is still more to the purpose, changed their whole manner of life and became sober, God-fearing citizens in consequence of what they heard; sceptical philosophers listened respectfully, if not to much purpose, to one who hardly knew what philosophy meant; fine gentlemen came to hear one who, in the conventional sense of the term, had very little of the gentleman about him; shrewd statesmen, who had a very keen appreciation of the value of money, were induced by the orator to give first copper, then silver, then gold, and then to borrow from their friends when they had emptied their own pockets.

What was the secret of his fascination? His printed sermons which have come down to us are certainly disappointing.[1] They are meagre compositions enough, feeble in thought and badly expressed; and what is known of Whitefield's mental powers would hardly lead us to expect them to be anything else. But it is scarcely necessary to remark that to judge of the effects of any address delivered by the way in which it reads is misleading; and it should also be remembered that what would sound to us mere truisms were new truths to the majority of those to whom Whitefield preached. A man of simple, earnest, loving spirit, utterly

[1] For some well-selected specimens of Whitefield's sermons see Tyerman's *Life of Whitefield*, vol. i. pp. 297–304, and ii. 567, &c.

devoid of self-consciousness and filled with only one thought—how best to recommend the religion which he loves—may produce a great effect without much theological learning. Such a spirit Whitefield had, if any man ever had. Moreover, if the first qualification of an orator be action, the second action, and the third action, Whitefield was undoubtedly an orator. A fine presence, attractive features, and a magnificent voice which could make itself heard at an almost incredible distance, and which he seems to have known perfectly well how to modulate, all tended to heighten the effect of his sermons. As to the matter of them, there was at least one point in which Whitefield was not deficient. He had the descriptive power in a very remarkable degree.[1] His description of a blind old man, deserted by his dog, stumbling on to the brink of a precipice, is said to have worked up Lord Chesterfield to such a pitch of excitement that, as the catastrophe approached, he could not help crying out in an agonised tone, 'Good God, he is gone!' Hume (who thought it worth going twenty miles to hear Whitefield preach) quotes another of his descriptions which is very effective. 'Once,' he says, 'after a solemn pause, he thus addressed his audience:—"The attendant angel is just about to leave the threshold of this sanctuary and ascend to heaven. And shall he ascend and not bear with him the news of one sinner among all this multitude reclaimed from the error of his way?" Then he stamped with his foot, lifted up his hands and eyes to heaven, and cried aloud, "Stop, Gabriel! stop ere you enter the sacred portals, and yet carry with you the news of one sinner converted to God!" This was accompanied with such animated yet natural action that it surpassed anything I ever saw or heard in any other preacher.' One more specimen of his descriptive power may be quoted. At the close of a sermon on the Last Judgment, after a pause he said, with tears in his eyes, 'I am going now to put on my condemning cap. Sinner, I must do it. I must pronounce sentence upon you.' Then, like a peal of thunder, 'Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels!'[2]

[1] See Gledstone's *Life of Whitefield*, 379, &c.

[2] Id. 511, &c.

If it were not that the expression conveyed an idea of unreality—the very last idea that should be associated with Whitefield's preaching—one might say that he had a good eye for dramatic effect. On a grassy knoll at Kingswood; in the midst of 'Vanity Fair' at Basingstoke or Moorfields, where the very contrast of all the surroundings would add impressiveness to the preacher's words; in Hyde Park at midnight, in darkness which might be felt, when men's hearts were panic-stricken at the prospect of the approaching earthquake, which was to be the precursor of the end of the world; on Hampton Common, surrounded by twelve thousand people, collected to see a man hung in chains—the scenery would all lend effect to the great preacher's utterances. Outdoor preaching was what he loved best. He felt 'cribbed, cabined, and confined' within any walls. 'Mounts,' he said, 'are the best pulpits, and the heavens the best sounding-boards.' 'I always find I have most power when I speak in the open air—a proof to me that God is pleased with this way of preaching.'[1] 'Every one hath his proper gift. Field-preaching is my plan. In this I am carried as on eagle's wings. God makes way for me everywhere.'[2]

In dwelling upon these secondary causes of Whitefield's success as a preacher it is by no means intended to lose sight of the great First Cause. God, who can make the weak things of this world to confound the mighty, could and did work for the revival of religion by this weak instrument. But God works through human agencies; and it is no derogation to the power of His grace, but simply tracing out the laws by which that grace works, when we note the human and natural agencies which all contributed to lend a charm to Whitefield's preaching. The difficulty of accounting for that charm is not so great as would at first sight appear. Indeed, immeasurably superior as Wesley's printed sermons are to Whitefield's in depth of thought, closeness of reasoning, and purity of diction, it is more difficult to explain the *excitement* which the older and far abler man produced than to explain

[1] *Life and Times of the Rev. G. Whitefield*, by Robert Philip, p. 130, &c.

[2] Whitefield's *Letters*: a Select Collection written to his Intimate Friends and Persons of Distinction in England, Scotland, Ireland, and America, from 1734 to 1770, vol. i. p. 277, &c.

that which attended the younger man's oratory. For Wesley —if we may judge from his printed sermons—carefully eschewed everything that would be called in the present day 'sensational.' Plain, downright common sense, expressed in admirably chosen but studiously simple language, formed the staple of his preaching. One can quite well understand any one being convinced and edified by such discourses, but there is nothing in them which is apparently calculated to produce the extraordinary excitement which, in a second degree only to Whitefield, Wesley did in fact arouse.

Preaching was Whitefield's great work in life,—and his work was also his pleasure. 'O that I could fly from pole to pole,' he exclaimed, 'preaching the everlasting Gospel.' When he is ill, he trusts that preaching will soon cure him again. 'This,' he says, 'is my grand Catholicon. O that I may drop and die in my blessed Master's work.' His wish was almost literally fulfilled. When his strength was failing him, when he was worn out before his time in his Master's work, he lamented that he was 'reduced to the short allowance of one sermon a day, and three on Sundays.'[1] He preached when he was literally a dying man.

His other work scarcely claims a passing notice in a short sketch like the present, especially as his peculiar opinions and his relationship with the Wesleys and others will again come under our notice in connection with the Calvinistic controversy. With the exception of letters to his friends and followers, and the inevitable journal (almost every member of the Evangelical school in the last century kept a journal), he wrote comparatively little; and what he did write, certainly need not cause us to regret that he wrote no more. On one of his voyages from America, Whitefield employed his leisure in abridging and gospelising Law's 'Serious Call.' Happily the work does not appear to have been finished; at any rate, it was not given to the world. Law's great work would certainly bear 'gospelising,' but Whitefield was not the man to do it. William Law improved by George Whitefield would be something like William Shakspeare improved by Colley Cibber. But the incident suggests the very different qualities which are required for the preacher and the writer. What was the

[1] See Whitefield's *Letters* (*ut supra*), *passim*.

character of Law's preaching we do not know; but we may safely assume that he could never have produced the effects which Whitefield did.[1] On the other hand, one trembles at the very thought of Whitefield meddling with Law's masterpiece, for he certainly could not have touched it without spoiling it.

Whitefield's Orphan House in Georgia was his hobby; it was only one out of a thousand instances of his benevolence; but his enthusiastic efforts in behalf of it hardly form a part of the Evangelical revival, and therefore need not be dwelt upon.

But in justice to his memory, as well as to complete the picture of his character, it is necessary to touch upon some of the many charges which were brought against him, and also to note his real defects.

The fullest and most honest exponent of the faults of George Whitefield is George Whitefield himself. In no spirit of affected self-abasement, but in a genuine spirit of humility, and with a real consciousness of his own infirmities and the dangers to which his peculiar position exposed him, Whitefield lays bare to us his own character, with all its temptations and all its weaknesses.[2] 'I have been too rash and hasty,' he writes in one place, 'in giving characters both of places and persons. Being fond of Scripture language I have often used a style too apostolical, and at the same time I have been too bitter in my zeal. Wildfire has been mixed with it, and I find that I frequently wrote and spoke in my own spirit when I thought it was by the assistance of the Spirit of God. I have likewise too much made inward impressions my rule of acting, and too soon and too explicitly published what had been better kept in longer, or told after my death. By these things I have given some wrong touches to God's Ark, and hurt the blessed cause I would defend, and also stirred up endless opposition.' He is 'a poor weak youth carried through such a torrent both of popularity and contempt.' 'It is too much for one man to be received as he has been received by thousands.'

[1] Even Warburton owned, 'of Whitefield's oratorical powers, and their astonishing influence on the minds of thousands, there can be no doubt. They are of a high order.'—*Life of Lady Huntingdon*, i. 450.

[2] See Philip's *Life of Whitefield* (*ut supra*), pp. 357, 401, &c.

He told his old Oxford tutor, whom he met at Bristol in 1748, that 'his judgment (as he trusted) was a little more ripened than it was some years ago, and that as fast as he found out his faults he should be glad to acknowledge them.' On his return from America in 1741, he records with sadness that the people of the world were embittered against him by his 'injudicious and too severe expressions against Tillotson and the author of the "Whole Duty of Man."'[1] And in answer to Bishop Lavington he confessed,[2] 'There is generally much, too much, severity in our first zeal; at least there was in mine; my and Seward's treatment of Tillotson were far too severe. We condemned his state, when we ought only in a candid manner, which I would do again, if called to it, to have mentioned what we judged wrong in his doctrines. I do not justify it. I condemn myself most heartily and ask pardon for it;' and to the same bitter opponent, 'Whatever can be produced out of any of my writings to prove that I have desired or prayed for ill usage, martyrdom, &c., I retract it with all my heart as proceeding from the overflowings of an irregular though well-meant zeal.' He owns that 'it put him to great pain' when he remembered that 'he had repeated in public private things that had occurred between him and Mr. Wesley, and especially that he had mentioned Mr. Wesley's casting a lot on a private occasion known only to God and themselves.'[3] It was 'very ill-judged to think the glory of God could be promoted by unnecessarily exposing my friend. For this I have asked pardon both of God and him years ago.' In the letters quoted in the 'Observations on the Conduct and Behaviour of the Methodists,' he owns that 'there are many things exceptionable. Casting lots he does not now approve of.' Even as early as 1739 his letters are full of confessions of his mistakes. 'The innumerable temptations,' he writes, 'that attend a popular life sometimes make me think it would be best for me to withdraw.'[4] 'Why,' he asks in another letter of the same date, 'did you not write me a letter of reproof, and smite me

[1] See Gledstone's *Life of Whitefield*, p. 275, &c. [2] Id. p. 401.
[3] Id. p. 402.
[4] Whitefield's *Letters*, vol. i. pp. 69, 106, 123, 165, 260, 261, 471. Vol. ii. p. 359, &c.

friendly for what you thought amiss in the discourse between me and a friend at Bristol? When I am unwilling to be told of my faults, dear Sir, correspond with me no more;' and in another, 'Success, I fear, elated my mind. I did not behave towards you and other ministers of Christ with that humility which became me. I freely confess my fault. I own myself to be but a novice. Your charity, dear Sir, will excite you to pray that I may not, through pride, fall into the condemnation of the devil.' In the next year, 1740, he writes, 'all that people do say of me affects me but little, because I know worse of myself than they can say concerning me.' In the next year, 'I am less positive than once I was, lest haply I should condemn some of God's dear children. The further we go in spiritual life, the more cool and rational shall we be, and yet more truly zealous.' And again, 'I hope as I make advances in spiritual life I shall show my zeal more and more tempered with true Christian knowledge and prudence. I would willingly have none of my wildfire mingled with the sacred fire that comes down from God's altar.' And in 1742, 'My mistakes have been so many, and my imprudence so great, that I have often wondered that the glorious Jesus would employ me in his service.'

It is impossible to help loving a man who so frankly and artlessly owns his faults. Criticism is disarmed when it is thus met half-way. It will be observed that Whitefield did not make a mere general confession of error, which often means nothing at all, if it does not proceed from the pride which apes humility. He hit the very blots in his own character. Naturally impetuous, and filled with a zeal for religion which was by no means tempered with discretion, he was constantly betrayed into rash and hasty expressions and actions, which he as constantly repented of, when it was too late. Take, for instance, such expressions as these which occur in his letters to John Wesley.[1] 'Remember you are but a babe in Christ, if so much. Be humble, talk little, think and pray much. If you must dispute, stay till you are master of the subject, otherwise you will hurt the cause you would defend.' 'For Christ's sake, be not rash. Give yourself to reading. Study the covenant of grace. Down with your

[1] Gledstone's *Life of Whitefield*, pp. 232 and 242.

carnal reasoning. Be a little child,' &c. Considering that Wesley was twelve years Whitefield's senior in years, and more than double that number in discretion, experience, and learning, such language was almost ludicrously out of place.

Take another instance. Bishop Benson had been the very kindest and most considerate of friends to Whitefield; and Whitefield fully appreciated his kindness, and constantly spoke and wrote of him 'as his good friend and father, good Bishop Benson.' Within three years of his ordination, the Bishop sent him 'an affectionate admonition to exercise the authority he had received in the manner it was given him, by preaching the Gospel only to the congregation to which he was lawfully appointed.'[1] In nine cases out of ten such advice would have been most seasonable when addressed to a young clergyman. Whitefield's case was quite exceptional, but at that time the Bishop could hardly have known that it was so. Let it be remembered that Bishop Benson was in a peculiar manner responsible for the conduct of Whitefield, since he had ordained him before the proper age, as an act of special favour. The Bishop was an old man, universally respected and beloved; Whitefield was a mere boy, hardly twenty-five years of age. And yet, without taking more than three days to consider the matter, he wrote to his venerable friend and benefactor in the following unseemly terms:—'I hope your lordship will inspect into the lives of your other clergy, and censure them for being over-remiss, as much as you censure me for being over-righteous [which the Bishop had never done]. As for declining the work in which I am engaged, my blood runs chill at the very thought of it. If you and the rest of the bishops cast us out, our great and common Master will take us up. However you may censure us as evil-doers and breakers of the peace, yet if we do suffer for our present way of acting, your lordship at the great day will find that we suffer only for righteousness' sake.'[2]

In 1742, Whitefield wrote to a clergyman in the Isle of Man, 'I heard that your bishop, seeing your zeal, and finding his opposition had inflamed, at last had ordered the clergy to open the church doors for you, and that you had

[1] Gledstone's *Life of Whitefield*, p. 154. [2] Id.

now done with appearing openly in defence of the glorious Gospel. Blessed be God, this is not true.'[1] Can it be believed that the Bishop, of whom Whitefield writes to one of his own clergy in this contemptuous style, was none other than the saintly Bishop Wilson, a man as superior to Whitefield in the maturity of Christian experience as he was in mental power?

In the same year he writes to a young man, 'I do not wonder at your father's opposition. His letter bespeaks him to be a man of a very bad spirit. I thought proper to burn it.'[2] We do not know the circumstances of the case; but it is difficult to conceive any circumstances under which the use of such language, setting a son against his own father, would not be in utter violation of the laws of both Scripture and nature.

Again, Whitefield was, in spite of his protestations to the contrary, far too ready to condemn in sweeping terms the order to which he belonged. It was very unbecoming for a young man under thirty years of age to speak of 'a whole body of lukewarm, prejudiced, envious, malignant clergy. These have always been the greatest opposers of true vital religion. These were our Saviour's most bitter opponents. These will be ours also, if we come forth in his spirit and preach by his power.'[3]

The impropriety of the language he used respecting Archbishop Tillotson and the author of the 'Whole Duty of Man,' both of whom, he said, knew no more of Christianity than Mahomet did, was, as we have seen, confessed by himself.[4]

[1] Whitefield's *Letters*, vol. i. p. 390. [2] Id. vol. i. p. 432.

[3] Id. vol. i. p. 390. Whitefield's conduct in the dispute at S. Margaret's, Westminster, in 1739, was not courteous to the clergy.—See Tyerman's *Life of Whitefield*, vol. i. p. 174. A sermon preached at Islington and Bexley on 'the spirit, doctrines, and lives of our modern clergy, not conformable to the spirit of Christ,' was very bitter. As his latest biographer remarks, his complaint that they thrust him out of their churches, and deprived him of the rights and privileges which he ought to enjoy, was mere petulance. 'He had no *right* to preach in other men's churches.'—Tyerman's *Life of Whitefield*, i. 247.

[4] But for some time he not only refused to retract it, but repeated it in still more offensive terms. On January 18, 1740, he wrote from Savannah, vindicating his assertion as follows:—'Upon the maturest deliberation, I say again, what I have often said before, that Tillotson knew no more about Christianity than Mahomet.

If Whitefield was reckless in his censures, he was, in other cases, far too lavish of his praises. The language which he used in writing to and of the nobility with whom he was thrown into contact is painful in the extreme. Lady Huntingdon is 'the elect lady,' 'an apostolic mother in Israel,' 'like a good archbishop with her chaplains around her.' *To* Lady Huntingdon he writes, 'when your ladyship stiled me your friend, I was amazed at your condescension. But when I thought that Jesus was my friend, it quite overcame me, and made me to lie prostrate before him crying, Why me, why me,' &c. *Of* the same lady he writes, 'Our truly noble mother in Israel is come to London, full of scars of Christian honour. "Crescit sub pondere virtus." She is come out of her cell with her face shining again. Happy they who have the honour of her acquaintance. Highly favoured are those ministers who have the honour of preaching for and serving her.'[1] To the Marquis of Lothian he writes, 'I am surprised to find your lordship so condescending as to write to me. How bright does humility shine in great personages. It is this renders God so amiable to his creatures. He is infinitely good, and withal infinitely condescending. He sent his Son,' &c. To Lady Fanny Shirley he writes, 'To be a martyr, a living witness for Jesus amidst the tip-top allurements of high life, by this we prove the strength of Jesus to be ours indeed;' and to another lady of rank, 'O madam, to see any one converted is a miracle. But to see a rich person, one of the mighty, one of the noble converted, is yet a greater.'

He was never a favourite of mine, and my dislike of him has been much increased, because I have observed that all natural men generally speak well of his works;' and in a later letter, 'the mystery of iniquity, wrapped up in Archbishop Tillotson's works, has been hid long enough; it is time it should be revealed.'—Tyerman, i. 360, &c.

[1] See Philip's *Life of Whitefield*, pp. 357 and 364. Also Whitefield's *Letters*, vol. i. pp. 312, &c.; vol. ii. pp. 167, 184; vol. iii. pp. 28, 337, 342, 343, &c. On one occasion her ladyship desired the public prayers of the Tabernacle for herself. Whitefield read that part of her letter to the people, and 'thousands' (he tells Lady Huntington) 'heartily joined in singing for your ladyship'—

> Gladly we join to pray for those
> Who rich with worldly honour shine,
> Who dare to own a Saviour's cause,
> And in that hated cause to join.
> Yes, we would praise Thee that a few
> Love Thee, though rich and noble too!

Whitefield's biographer thinks that no excuse can be made for all this fulsome flattery.[1] But surely there is very great excuse. Whitefield's training at Oxford, no less than at Gloucester, was all calculated to foster a habit of servility. His sudden elevation was enough to dazzle a stronger mind than he possessed. And, indeed, many of the expressions quoted above, offensive and even nauseous as they are in themselves, ought to be read in the light which our knowledge of Whitefield's character sheds upon them. The flattery, gross as it was, was no doubt perfectly sincere. Whitefield was a very humble-minded man; and expressions of the most genuine humility may sometimes wear the appearance of a servility which was very far from the writer's thoughts, and which are really attributable to a deficiency of refinement and good taste. The whole tenor of Whitefield's life shows us that he was in heart the very reverse of a sycophant. He gained no worldly advantage whatever, and sought none, from those whom he calls 'the mighty and the noble.' Indeed, they had nothing to give him which he would have cared to have. For money he had not the least value.[2] Preferment he would certainly not have accepted. Social distinction would have been entirely out of his line. But he was sincerely thankful to find a way open for the Gospel in the highest circles, and the passages which have been quoted are simply specimens of the way in which he expressed that thankfulness.

> Uphold this star in Thy right hand,
> Crown her endeavours with success,
> Among the great ones may she stand
> A witness of Thy righteousness,
> Till many nobles join the train,
> And triumph in the Lamb that's slain.

[1] See Philip's *Life of Whitefield*, p. 365, 'Whitefield's self-complacency in the patronage of the countess and his "elect ladies," his many and fulsome compliments to them, admit of no excuse.'

[2] He was sometimes most unjustly accused of making a gain of godliness. 'Let his opponents,' said Annet, 'ask Mr. Whitefield if charitable collections and common-purse money are not very good things.' As, however, Annet brings the same charge against the apostles, Whitefield might be content to bear reproach in such good company. Horace Walpole also declared that 'Whitefield and the Methodists made more money than disturbances.'—*Memoirs of the Reign of George II.*, vol. iii. p. 97.

He expressed himself, it is admitted, with execrable taste; but that is just what one would have expected from George Whitefield. It arose simply from an intellectual defect and from the want of early training, not from any meanness of nature. It is not only when he is writing to and of countesses and marquises that his mode of expressing himself jars upon us most painfully. The same bad taste is equally conspicuous when he is writing on far higher subjects even than what he calls 'tip-top gentility.' The man who could write such passages as these:[1]—'Jesus is a precious master; he, as it were, dandles me upon his knee;' 'There is oil enough in our Aaron for all;' 'O that the prison door was set open, and the bird suffered to fly out of the cage; then would I fly to heaven, and upon one of the boughs of free grace sing the praises of redeeming love for ever and ever,' without being in the least conscious that he was writing what would call up in the mind of any one endowed with a sense of humour ludicrous images in subjects of which no one better than he felt the awful solemnity, might well write what he did to the 'great ones,' without being in the least aware that he was writing what would sound nauseous and fulsome. John Wesley could never have written as Whitefield did; but then John Wesley possessed in a very high degree, as all his writings prove, two qualities of which Whitefield was utterly devoid—good taste and a sense of humour.

Whitefield's intercourse with the higher classes is the least satisfactory part of his career. Those sermons in Lady Huntingdon's drawing-room at Chelsea and Bath do not appear to have done much real good. The hollow compliments of men like Chesterfield, and the half-contemptuous patronage of men like Bolingbroke, were in reality degrading both to Whitefield himself, and to the cause which he had very near at heart.[2] If men of the intellect of Hume

[1] See Whitefield's *Letters*, vol. i. p. 293, &c.

[2] Whitefield, however, thought very differently. He wrote to John Wesley—of all men in the world—most hopefully and with evident self-complacency about his influence with the great. 'I suppose you will hear of my preaching to some of the nobility, and I trust the time is coming when some of the mighty and noble shall be called,' &c.—(*Letters*, ii. 169). 'A privy councillor of the King of Denmark and others, with one of the Prince of Wales' favourites, dined and drank tea with me on Monday. On Tuesday, I preached twice at Lady Huntingdon's to several

and Bolingbroke were to be convinced of the truth of Christianity, it must have been by men of very different intellectual calibre from that of George Whitefield.

But Whitefield's intimacy with the great did not in the least detract from his love for the poor; he was just as ready to sympathise with them, and just as anxious to do good to their souls after he had come from Lady Huntingdon's drawing-room, or from a call on Lord Bolingbroke, as he was when he first taught the Kingswood outcasts that there was one large-hearted man at least who cared for their souls.

To the same defects of intellect and education which led Whitefield to flatter the nobility we must attribute other blemishes in his character. He was not only an advocate of slavery, but himself a slave-owner, and he writes about the introduction of slaves and rum into Georgia as if it really were a sort of missionary work.[1] The arguments by which he justifies slavery are utterly fallacious, but they were no doubt thoroughly convincing to his own mind. 'As to the lawfulness of keeping slaves,' he writes, 'I have no doubt, since I hear of some that were bought with Abraham's money, and some that were born in his house. And I cannot help thinking that some of those servants mentioned by the apostles in their epistles were or had been slaves. It is plain that the Gibeonites were doomed to perpetual slavery, and though liberty is a sweet thing to such as are born free, yet to those who never saw the sweets of it slavery perhaps may not be so irksome. However this be, it is plain to demonstration that hot countries cannot be cultivated without negroes.' It is true that the advocacy of slavery did not then imply the same degree of moral insensibility as it would necessarily

of the nobility. In the morning, the Earl of Chesterfield was present. Lord C. thanked me, and said, "Sir, I will not tell you how much I approve of you." In the evening, Lord Bolingbroke was present. All behaved quite well, and were in some degree affected. Lord Bolingbroke was much moved, and desired I would come and see him next morning. I did; and his lordship behaved with great candour and frankness,' &c.—*Letters*, vol. ii. 170.

[1] 'I believe God will take Georgia into his own hands. . . . The use of rum was granted, but the use of slaves denied. Let us stand still, be instant in prayer, and we shall certainly see the salvation of God.' Written in March, 1751.—See Whitefield's *Letters*, vol. ii. p. 404.

argue at the present day,[1] but there were many, even in Whitefield's time,[2] John Wesley among the number, who thoroughly appreciated the unchristian character of the system. It was no want of benevolence which led Whitefield to sanction the odious custom: he was always kind to his slaves, and anxious to promote their spiritual welfare; as, indeed, he was to promote that of every human being with whom he ever came into contact. His mistake simply arose from a want of delicacy of moral perception. One more specimen of the same sort of obtuseness may be noted. During his last visit to Georgia, he held an anniversary at his Orphan House, for which he himself composed a speech, which was to be recited by one of the orphans. In that speech the boy was instructed to refer to the 'indefatigable industry, unparalleled disinterestedness, and unwearied perseverance of its reverend founder.'[3] A man with any sort of perception of the fitness of things could never have written thus of himself, unless he was inordinately vain. This Whitefield assuredly was not, but he was sadly wanting in intellectual delicacy.

It has been a thankless task to have dwelt so long upon the weaknesses of a thoroughly good man; but it seemed necessary both to vindicate the character of one of the chief leaders of the Evangelical revival from imputations to which the mere enumeration of his errors without explaining also the extenuating circumstances might have justly exposed him; and necessary also in order to do justice to some of his opponents, who were not enemies to Christianity, though

[1] Bishop Butler argues with charming simplicity, in a sermon on the anniversary of S.P.G. in 1738–9, 'If the necessity of the case requires that slaves may be treated with the very utmost rigour that humanity at all permits, as they certainly are; and for our advantage, made as miserable as they well can be in the present world; this surely heightens our obligations to put them into as advantageous a situation as we are able with regard to another.' Even the gentle and humane James Hervey gave to Whitefield, as a parting gift, a slave. 'When you please to demand,' he wrote, 'my brother will pay you 30*l.* for the purchase of a negro. And may the Lord Jesus Christ give you, or rather take for himself, the precious soul of the poor slave!' The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts was itself a slaveholder.

[2] The Trustees of the Georgian Colony interdicted the introduction of slaves. General Oglethorpe said, 'Slavery is against the gospel as well as against the fundamental law of England.'—See Tyerman's *Life of Whitefield*, i. 14.

[3] Philip's *Life of Whitefield*, pp. 505–507.

they were enemies to this eloquent and disinterested but somewhat rash and injudicious champion of it. But Whitefield's faults were all faults of his head, not of his heart; considering what his training had been, the only wonder is that he did not fall into more. He would have done, had it not been for the many noble qualities which counterbalanced his errors. He was a true Christian hero, a man of boundless benevolence, a man to whom justice was never done by the great body of his contemporaries. He was worthy of the eulogy which one of his many spiritual sons passed upon him. 'I never,' wrote James Hervey,[1] 'beheld so fair a copy of our Lord, such a living image of the Saviour, such exalted delight in God, such steady faith in the divine promises, such fervent zeal for the divine glory. And all this without the least moroseness of humour or extravagance of behaviour, but sweetened with most engaging cheerfulness of temper, and regulated by all the sobriety of reason and wisdom of Scripture. Many sons have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all.' A still nobler and more enduring monument to the memory of this much maligned spiritual hero was raised by the great Christian poet of the century. Burning with indignation at the treatment which Whitefield had received from his contemporaries, Cowper wrote those famous lines, which, often quoted as they have been, are yet worth quoting once again as a fitting conclusion to the sketch of him who was emphatically the orator of the Evangelical revival:—

> Leuconomus (beneath well-sounding Greek
> I slur a name a poet must not speak)
> Stood pilloried on infamy's high stage,
> And bore the pelting scorn of half an age;
> The very butt of slander, and the blot
> For every dart that malice ever shot.
> The man that mention'd *him* at once dismiss'd
> All mercy from his lips, and sneer'd and hiss'd.
> His crimes were such as Sodom never knew,
> And perjury stood up to swear all true;
> His aim was mischief, and his zeal pretence,
> His speech rebellion against common sense;

[1] Quoted by Mr. Philip, *Life of Whitefield*, p. 349.

A knave, when tried on honesty's plain rule,
And when by that of reason, a mere fool;
The world's best comfort was, his doom was pass'd,
Die when he might, he must be damn'd at last.

. . . . . .

Now, Truth, perform thine office; waft aside
The curtain drawn by prejudice and pride,
Reveal (the man is dead) to wondering eyes
This more than monster in his proper guise.
He loved the world that hated him; the tear
That dropp'd upon his Bible was sincere—
Assail'd by scandal and the tongue of strife,
His only answer was a blameless life,
And he that forged and he that threw the dart
Had each a brother's interest in his heart.
Paul's love of Christ, and steadiness unbribed,
Were copied close in him, and well transcribed;
He followed Paul—his zeal a kindred flame,
His apostolic charity the same,
Like him, cross'd cheerfully tempestuous seas,
Forsaking country, kindred, friends, and ease;
Like him he labour'd, and, like him, content
To bear it, suffered shame where'er he went.
Blush, calumny! and write upon his tomb,
If honest eulogy can spare thee room,
Thy deep repentance of thy thousand lies,
Which, aim'd at him, have pierced the offended skies,
And say, Blot out my sin, confess'd, deplored,
Against thine image in thy saint, O Lord.

The individuality of *Charles Wesley* (1708–1788), the sweet psalmist of Methodism, is perhaps in some danger of being merged in that of his more distinguished brother. And yet he had a very decided character of his own; he would have been singularly unlike the Wesley family if he had not. Charles Wesley was by no means the mere *fidus Achates*, or man Friday, of his brother John. Quite apart from his poetry, the effects of which upon the early Methodist movement it would be difficult to exaggerate, he played a most important part in the revival. As a preacher, he was almost as energetic as John; and before his marriage he was almost as effective an itinerant. His elder brother always spoke

of the work which was being done as their joint work; 'my brother and I' is the expression he constantly used in describing it.[1]

As a general rule, the two brothers acted in complete harmony; but differences occurred sometimes, and, when they did, Charles Wesley showed that he had a very decided will of his own, and he could generally make it felt. For instance, in 1744, when the Wesleys were most unreasonably suspected of inclining to Popery, and of favouring the Pretender, John Wesley wrote an address to the king, 'in the name of the Methodists;' but it was laid aside because Charles Wesley objected to any act which would seem to constitute them a sect, or at least would seem to allow that they were a body distinct from the National Church. Again, from the first, Charles Wesley looked with great suspicion on the bodily excitement which attended his brother's preaching, and it is more than probable that he helped to modify John Wesley's opinions on this subject. On the ordination question, Charles Wesley felt very strongly; he never fell in with his brother's views, but vehemently disapproved of his whole conduct in the matter. He would probably have interfered still more actively, but for some years before the ordination question arose he had almost ceased to itinerate, partly, Mr. Tyerman thinks, because he was married, and partly because of the feeling in many societies, and especially among many preachers, against the Church. In 1753, when John Wesley was dangerously ill, Charles Wesley distinctly told the societies that he neither could nor would stand in his brother's place, if it pleased God to take him, for he had neither a body, nor a mind, nor talents, nor grace, for it. In 1779, he wrote to his brother in terms as peremptory as John himself was wont to use, and such as few others would have dared to employ in addressing the founder of Methodism. 'The preachers,' he writes,[2] 'do not love the Church of England. When we are gone, a separation is inevitable. Do you not wish to keep as many good people in the Church as you can? Something might be done now to save the remainder, if only you had resolution, and would stand by me as firmly as I

[1] See *Memoirs of the Rev. C. Wesley*, by Thomas Jackson, *passim*.

[2] See Tyerman's *Life of John Wesley*, vol. iii. p. 310.

will stand by you. Consider what you are bound to do as a clergyman, and what you do, do quickly.' It has been already stated that Charles was, if possible, even more attached to the Church than John. John, on his part, fully felt the need of his brother's help. In 1768, he wrote to him, 'I am at my wits' end with regard to two things: the Church, and Christian perfection. Unless both you and I stand in the gap in good earnest, the Methodists will drop them both. Talking will not avail, we must *do*, or be borne away. "Age, vir esto! nervos intende tuos."' On another occasion, John rescued his brother from a dangerous tendency which he showed towards the stillness of the Moravians. He wrote to him, 'The poison is in you, fair words have stolen away your heart;' and made this characteristic entry in his journal:—'The Philistines are upon thee, Samson; but the Lord is not departed from thee; He shall strengthen thee yet again, and thou shalt be avenged for the loss of thine eyes.'

Thus this 'par nobile fratrum' strengthened and helped one another. There is an interesting letter from Whitefield to Charles Wesley, dated December 22, 1752, from which it appears that there was a threatened rupture between the two brothers, the cause of which we do not know.[1] 'I have read and pondered your kind letter with a degree of solemnity of spirit. What shall I say? Really I can scarce tell. The connection between you and your brother hath been so close and continued, and your attachment so necessary to him to keep up his interest, that I could not willingly for the world do or say anything that may separate such friends. I cannot help thinking that he is still jealous of me and my proceedings; but I thank God I am quite easy about it.'[2] The last sentence is characteristically injudicious, if Whitefield desired,

This was written before the author had read Mr. Tyerman's *Life of Whitefield*; indeed, before that life was published. Mr. Tyerman informs us that the dispute arose because some of the preachers informed Wesley that his brother Charles did not enforce discipline so strictly as himself, and that Charles agreed with Whitefield 'touching perseverance, at least, if not predestination too.'—Tyerman's *Life of Whitefield*, ii. 288.

[2] Gledstone's *Life of Whitefield*, p. 439, but surely Mr. Gledstone is scarcely justified in adding quite gratuitously, 'John Wesley was not a man with whom it was easy to be on good terms; his lofty claims must have fretted his brother and created uneasiness.' Charles Wesley was quite equal to cope with John if he had preferred any 'lofty claims' beyond those which an elder brother might

as undoubtedly he did, to heal the breach; but the letter is valuable as showing that, in the opinion of Whitefield, who must have known as much about the matter as any one, the co-operation of the two brothers was essential to their joint work.

Indeed, if for no other reason, Charles Wesley occupies a most important place in the history of early Methodism, as forming the connecting link between John Wesley and Whitefield. In October, 1749, he wrote, 'George Whitefield and my brother and I are one; a threefold cord which shall no more be broken;' but he does not add, as he might have done, that he himself was the means by which the union was effected. The contrast between Whitefield and John Wesley, in character, tastes, culture, &c., was so very great that, quite apart from their doctrinal differences, there could probably never have been any real intimacy between them, had there not been some common friend who had in his character some points of contact with both. That common friend was Charles Wesley. Full of sterling common sense, highly cultured and refined, possessed of strong reasoning powers, and well read like his brother, he was impulsive, demonstrative in his feelings, and very tender-hearted like Whitefield. Whitefield never quite appreciated John Wesley,[1] but Charles

naturally have upon a younger. But, in point of fact, there is no trace of any such rivalry between the brothers.

[1] Mr. Tyerman says, 'Whitefield dearly loved Wesley, and by his actions showed that he did.'—*Life of Whitefield*, ii. 587. This is true, no doubt, in a certain sense; but many passages in Whitefield's letters to Lady Huntingdon and others surely show that he did not quite appreciate his great fellow-Evangelist. For example, in 1750 (the year after the reconciliation), he writes to Lady Huntingdon, 'I have offered Mr. Wesley to assist occasionally at his chapel, and I don't know but it may be accepted. O that I may learn from all I see to desire to be nothing! and to think it my highest privilege to be an assistant to all, but the head of none. I find a love of power intoxicates even God's own dear children, and makes them to mistake passion for zeal, and an overbearing spirit for an authority given them from above. For my own part, I find it much easier to obey than govern, and much safer to be trodden under foot than to have it in one's power to serve others so.' The allusion to Wesley's supposed love of power and overbearing spirit is surely obvious. And in 1755, 'At Leeds I fear an awful separation will take place among the societies. I have written to Mr. Wesley, and done all I could to prevent it. O this self-love, this self-will. It is the very devil of devils.' It would be easy to multiply testimony to the same effect. Mr. Gledstone (p. 438, &c.) bears too hardly upon Wesley in his remarks on this want of sympathy between the two great Reformers, but he is right in his facts.

he loved dearly, and so did John. As we have seen, the one solitary instance of the strong man's breaking down was on the death of his brother. And Charles Wesley was thoroughly worthy of every good man's love. His fame (except as a poet) has been somewhat overshadowed by the still greater renown of his brother, but he contributed his full share towards the success of the Evangelical Revival.

If John Wesley was the great leader and organiser, Charles Wesley the great poet, and George Whitefield the great preacher of Methodism, the highest type of saintliness which it produced was unquestionably *John Fletcher* (1729–1785). Never, perhaps, since the rise of Christianity has the mind which was in Christ Jesus been more faithfully copied than it was in the Vicar of Madeley. To say that he was a good Christian is saying too little. He was more than Christian, he was Christlike. It is said that Voltaire, when challenged to produce a character as perfect as that of Jesus Christ, at once mentioned Fletcher of Madeley; and if the comparison between the God-man and any child of Adam were in any case admissible, it would be difficult to find one with whom it could be instituted with less appearance of blasphemy than this excellent man. Fletcher was a Swiss by birth and education; and to the last he showed traces of his foreign origin. But England can claim the credit of having formed his spiritual character. Soon after his settlement in England as tutor to the sons of Mr. Hill of Terne Hall, he became attracted by the Methodist movement, which had then (1752) become a force in the country, and in 1753 he was admitted into Holy Orders. The account of his appointment to the living of Madeley presents a very unusual phenomenon in the eighteenth century. His patron, Mr. Hill, offered him the living of Dunham, 'where the population was small, the income good, and the village situated in the midst of a fine sporting country.' These were no recommendations in the eyes of Fletcher, and he declined the living on the ground that the income was too large and the population too small. Madeley had the advantage of having only half the income and double the population of Dunham. On being asked whether he would accept Madeley if the vicar of that parish would consent to exchange it for Dunham, Fletcher

gladly embraced the offer. As the Vicar of Madeley had naturally no objection to so advantageous an exchange, Fletcher was instituted to the cure of the large Shropshire village, in which he spent a quarter of a century. There is no need to record his apostolical labours in this humble sphere of duty. Madeley was a rough parish, full of colliers; but there was also a sprinkling of resident gentry. Like his friend John Wesley, Fletcher found more fruits of his work among the poor than among the gentry. But none, whether rich or poor, could resist the attractions of this saintly man. In 1772 he addressed 'An appeal to matter of fact and common sense to the Principal Inhabitants of the Parish of Madeley,' the dedication of which is so characteristic that it is worth quoting in full. 'Gentlemen,' writes the vicar, 'you are no less entitled to my private labours than the inferior class of my parishioners. As you do not choose to partake with them of my evening instructions, I take the liberty to present you with some of my morning meditations. May these well-meant efforts of my pen be more acceptable to you than those of my tongue! And may you carefully read in your closets, what you have perhaps inattentively heard in the church! I appeal to the Searcher of hearts, that I had rather impart truth than receive tithes. You kindly bestow the latter upon me; grant me the satisfaction of seeing you receive favourably the former from, gentlemen, your affectionate minister and obedient servant, J. Fletcher.'

When Lady Huntingdon founded her college for the training of ministers at Trevecca, she invited Fletcher to undertake a sort of general superintendence over it. This Fletcher undertook without fee or reward—not, of course, with the intention of residing there, for he had no sympathy with the bad custom of non-residence which was only too common in his day. He was simply to visit the college as frequently as he could; 'and,' writes Dr. Benson, the first head-master, 'he was received as an angel of God.' 'It is not possible,' he adds, 'for me to describe the veneration in which we all held him. Like Elijah in the schools of the Prophets, he was revered, he was loved, he was almost adored. My heart kindles while I write. Here it was that I saw, shall I say an angel in human flesh?—I should not far exceed the truth if I

said so'—and much more to the same effect. It was the same wherever Fletcher went; the impression he made was extraordinary; language seems to fail those who tried to describe it. 'I went,' said one who visited him in an illness (he was always delicate), 'to see a man that had one foot in the grave, but I found a man that had one foot in heaven.'[1] 'Sir,' said Mr. Venn to one who asked him his opinion of Fletcher, 'he was a *luminary*—a luminary did I say?—he was a *sun*! I have known all the great men for these fifty years, but none like him.' John Wesley was of the same opinion; in Fletcher he saw realised in the highest degree all that he meant by 'Christian Perfection.' For some time he hesitated to write a description of this 'great man,' 'judging that only an Apelles was proper to paint an Alexander;' but at length he published his well-known sermon on the significant text, 'Mark the perfect man, &c.' (Ps. xxxvii. 37), which he concluded with this striking testimony to the unequalled character of his friend: 'I was intimately acquainted with him for above thirty years; I conversed with him morning, noon, and night without the least reserve, during a journey of many hundred miles; and in all that time I never heard him speak one improper word, nor saw him do an improper action. To conclude: many exemplary men have I known, holy in heart and life, within fourscore years, but one equal to him I have not known—one so inwardly and outwardly devoted to God. So unblamable a character in every respect I have not found either in Europe or America; and I scarce expect to find another such on this side of eternity.' Fletcher, on his part, was one of the few parish clergymen who to the end thoroughly appreciated John Wesley. He thought it 'shameful that no clergyman should join Wesley to keep in the Church the work God had enabled him to carry on therein;' and he was half inclined to join him as his deacon, 'not,' he adds with genuine modesty, 'with any view of presiding over the Methodists after you, but to ease you a little in your old age, and to be in the way of receiving, perhaps doing, more good.' Wesley was very anxious that Fletcher should be his successor, and proposed it to him in a

[1] See *Life and Times of Selina, Countess of Huntingdon*, by a member of the houses of Shirley and Hastings, vol. ii. pp. 71, 72.

characteristic letter; but Fletcher declined the office, and had he accepted, the plan could never have been carried out, for the hale old man survived his younger friend several years. The last few years of Fletcher's life were cheered by the companionship of one to whom no higher praise can be awarded than to say that she was worthy of being Fletcher's wife. Next to Mrs. Wesley herself, Mrs. Fletcher stands pre-eminent among the heroines of Methodism. In 1785 the saint entered into his everlasting rest, dying in harness at his beloved Madeley. His death-bed scene is too sacred to be transferred to these pages.

Indeed, there is something almost unearthly about the whole of this man's career. He is an object in some respects rather for admiration than for imitation. He could do and say things which other men could not without some sort of unreality. John Wesley, with his usual good sense, warns his readers of this in reference to one particular habit, viz. 'the facility of raising useful observations from the most trifling incidents.' 'In him,' he says, 'it partly resulted from nature, and was partly a supernatural gift. But what was becoming and graceful in Mr. Fletcher would be disgustful almost in any other.' An ordinary Christian, for example, who, when he was having his likeness taken, should exhort 'the limner, and all that were in the room, not only to get the outlines drawn, but the colourings also of the image of Jesus on their hearts;' who, 'when ordered to be let blood,' should, 'while his blood was running into the cup, take occasion to expatiate on the precious blood-shedding of the Lamb of God;' who should tell his cook 'to stir up the fire of divine love in her soul,' and entreat his housemaid 'to sweep every corner in her heart;' who, when he received a present of a new coat, should, in thanking the donor, draw a minute and elaborate contrast between the broadcloth and the robe of Christ's righteousness—would run the risk of making not only himself, but the sacred subjects which he desired to recommend, ridiculous. Unfortunately there were not a few, both in Fletcher's day and subsequently, who did fall into this error, and, with the very best intentions, dragged the most solemn truths through the dirt. Fletcher, besides being so heavenly-minded that what would seem forced and strained

in others seemed perfectly natural in him, was also a man of cultivated understanding and (with occasional exceptions) of refined and delicate taste; but in this matter he was a dangerous model to follow. Who but Fletcher, for instance, could, without savouring of irreverence or even blasphemy, when offering some ordinary refreshment to his friends, have accompanied it with the words, 'The Body of our Lord Jesus Christ,' &c., and 'The Blood of our Lord,' &c.? But extraordinary as was the spiritual-mindedness of this man of God, he could, without an effort, descend to earthly matters on occasion. One of the most beautiful traits of his character was illustrated on one of these occasions. He had done the Government good service by writing on the American Rebellion, and Lord Dartmouth was commissioned to ask him whether any preferment would be acceptable to him. 'I want nothing,' answered the simple-hearted Christian, 'but more grace.' His love of children was another touching characteristic of Fletcher. 'The birds of my fine wood,' he wrote to a friend, 'have almost done singing; but I have met with a parcel of children whose hearts seem turned towards singing the praises of God, and we sing every day from four to five. Help us by your prayers.' And again: 'The day I preached, I met with some children in my wood, walking or gathering strawberries. I spoke to them about our Father, our common Father; we felt a touch of brotherly affection. They said they would sing to their Father as well as the birds; and followed me, attempting to make such melody as you know is commonly made in these parts [Switzerland]. I outrode them; but some of them had the patience to follow me home, and said they would speak with me; but the people of the house stopped them, saying I would not be troubled with children. They cried, and said they were sure I would not say so, for I was their good brother. The next day when I heard it, I inquired after them, and invited them to come to me; which they have done every day since. I make them little hymns which they sing.' 'At another time when he had a considerable number of children before him, in a place in his parish, as he was persuading them to mind what they were about, and to remember the text which he was going to mention, just then a robin flew into the house, and their eyes

were presently turned after him. "Now," said he, "I see you can attend to that robin. Well, I will take that robin for my text." He then gave them a useful lecture on the harmlessness of that little creature, and the tender care of its Creator.'[1]

Having described the leader, the orator, the poet, and the saint of Methodism, it still remains to say something about the patroness of the movement. Methodism won its chief triumphs among the poor and lower middle classes. The upper classes, though a revival of religion was sorely needed among them, were not perceptibly affected. To promote this desirable object, *Selina, Countess of Huntingdon* (1707–1791), sacrificed her time, her energies, her money, and her social reputation.

It is impossible to help respecting a lady whose whole life was devoted to so noble an aim. In one sense she gave up more than any of the promoters of Methodism had the opportunity of doing. For, in the first place, she had more to give up; and, in the second, it required more moral courage than the rest were called upon to exercise to run counter to all the prejudices of the class to which she naturally belonged. Both by birth and by marriage she was connected with some of the noblest families in the kingdom, and, by general confession, religion was at a very low ebb among the nobility in Lady Huntingdon's day. The prominent part which she took in the Evangelical Revival exposed her to that contempt and ridicule of her own order which are to many harder to bear than actual persecution. To the credit, however, of the nobility, it must be added that most of them learnt to respect Lady Huntingdon's character and motives, though they could not be persuaded to embrace her opinions. With a few exceptions, chiefly among her own sex, Lady Huntingdon was not very successful in her attempts to affect, to any practical purpose, the class to which she belonged; but she was marvellously successful in persuading the most distinguished persons in the intellectual as well as the social world to come and hear her favourite preachers. No ball or masquerade brought together more brilliant assemblies than

[1] See the *Life of the Rev. John W. de la Flechere*, by the Rev. Joseph Benson, *passim*, and especially pages 38, 50, 80, 145, 152, 198, 212, 236, 237, 247, 296.

those which met in her drawing-room at Chelsea, or her chapel at Bath, or in the Tabernacle itself, to hear Whitefield and others preach. To enumerate the company would be to enumerate the most illustrious men and women of the day. The Earl of Chatham, Lord North, the Earl of Sandwich, Bubb Doddington, George Selwyn, Charles Townshend, Horace Walpole, Lord Camden, Lord Northington, the Earl of Chesterfield, Viscount Bolingbroke, the Earl of Bath, Frederick, Prince of Wales, the Duke of Cumberland, John, Lord Hervey, the Duke of Bolton, the Duke of Grafton, Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, the Duchess of Buckingham, Lady Townshend, were at different times among the hearers.[1] Horace Walpole tells us that in 1766 it was quite the rage at Bath among persons in high life to form parties to hear the different preachers who 'supplied' the chapel. The bishops themselves did not disdain to attend 'incognito;' curtained seats were placed immediately inside the door, where the prelates were smuggled in; and this was wittily called 'Nicodemus's corner.' It would be uncharitable and presumptuous to say that *no* good was effected; but it is painfully obvious that few of the hearers made any change in their lives in consequence of what they heard. Indeed, if they came in the spirit in which some of them confessed they did, it was no fault of the preacher that he could not move them, for they would have been proof against the tongue of an angel. Thus we find the Duchess of Buckingham accepting an invitation from Lady Huntingdon to attend her chapel at Bath in the following words: 'I thank your ladyship for the information concerning the Methodist preachers; their doctrines are most repulsive and strongly tinctured with impertinence and disrespect towards their superiors, in perpetually endeavouring to level all ranks and do away with all distinctions. It is monstrous to be told you have a heart as sinful as the common wretches that crawl on the earth. This is highly offensive and insulting; and I cannot but wonder that your ladyship should relish any sentiments so much at variance with high rank and good breeding. I shall be most

[1] For a fuller list of the 'brilliant assemblies' which Lady Huntingdon gathered together, see Tyerman's *Life of Whitefield*, ii. 209, &c., and 407, &c. Mr. Tyerman takes a more hopeful view of the good that was done among these classes than is taken in the text.

happy to come and hear your favourite preacher.'[1] Horace Walpole (who, however, is not always to be trusted when he is writing on religious matters) wrote to Sir Horace Mann, March 23, 1749: 'Methodism is more fashionable than anything but brag; the women play very deep at both—as deep, it is much suspected, as the Roman matrons did at the mysteries of Bona Dea. If gracious Anne were alive she would make an admirable defendress of the new faith, and build fifty more churches for female proselytes.'[2] It is fair to add, however, that some of the ablest among the hearers were the most impressed. David Hume's opinion of Whitefield's preaching has already been noticed. David Garrick[3] was certainly not disposed to ridicule it. There is no reason to doubt the sincerity of Lord Bolingbroke's sentiments expressed in a private letter to the Earl of Marchmont: 'I hope you heard from me by myself, as well as of me by Mr. Whitefield. This apostolical person preached some time ago at Lady Huntingdon's, and I should have been curious to hear him. Nothing kept me from going but an imagination that there was to be a select auditory. That saint, our friend Chesterfield was there, and I heard from him an extreme good account of the sermon.'[4] Lord Bolingbroke afterwards did hear Whitefield, and said to Lady Huntingdon: 'You may command my pen when you will; it shall be drawn in your service. For, admitting the Bible to be true, I shall have little apprehension of maintaining the doctrines of predestination and grace against all your revilers.' We do not hear that this new defender of the faith *did* employ his pen in Lady Huntingdon's service, and few perhaps will regret that he did not. The extreme dislike of Lords Bolingbroke and Chesterfield for the regular clergy, whom they would be glad to annoy in any way they could, might have had something to do with their patronage of the 'new lights,' as the

[1] See Gledstone's *Life of Whitefield*, p. 304.

[2] *Letters of Horace Walpole*, from 1744 to 1753.

[3] Not so Garrick's brother actor, Foote. The 'Minor' was a cruel attack upon Whitefield. Foote spoke an epilogue in the character of Whitefield, 'whom he dressed and imitated to the life.'—(See Forster's *Essays*, 'Samuel Foote.') Foote defended himself on the ground that Whitefield was 'ever profaning the name of God with blasphemous nonsense,' &c.

[4] *Marchmont Papers*, ii. 377.

Methodists were called. But this cannot be said of others. The Earl of Bath, for instance, accompanied a donation of 50*l.* to Lady Huntingdon for the Tabernacle at Bristol with the following remark: 'Mocked and reviled as Mr. Whitefield is (1749) by all ranks of society, still I contend that the day will come when England will be just, and own his greatness as a reformer, and his goodness as a minister of the Most High God.'[1] Lord Chesterfield gave 20*l.* to the same object.

Lady Huntingdon was not content with enlisting the nobility in favour of her cause. She made her way to the Court itself. The circumstances of her introduction are well known. She was scandalised by the gaiety of Archbishop Cornwallis's household, and, after having fruitlessly remonstrated with the primate, she laid her case before the King and the Queen. She was not only successful in the immediate object of her visit—the King, in consequence, writing a sharp letter to the archbishop, desiring him to desist from his unseemly routs—but was told by George III. that he was happy in having an opportunity of assuring her ladyship of the very good opinion he had of her, and how very highly he estimated her character, her zeal, and her abilities, which could not be consecrated to a more noble purpose. He then referred to her ministers, who, he understood, were very eloquent preachers. The bishops were jealous of them; and the King related a conversation he had lately had with a learned prelate. He had complained of the conduct of some of her ladyship's students and ministers, who had created a sensation in his diocese; and his Majesty replied, 'Make bishops of them—make bishops of them.' 'That might be done,' replied the prelate; 'but, please your Majesty, we cannot make a bishop of Lady Huntingdon.' The Queen replied, 'It would be a lucky circumstance if you could, for she puts you all to shame.' 'Well,' said the King, 'see if you cannot imitate the zeal of these men.' His lordship made some reply which displeased the King, who exclaimed with great animation, 'I wish there was a Lady Huntingdon in every diocese in the kingdom!'[2]

[1] *Lady Huntingdon's Life* (*ut supra*), ii. 379.

[2] See the *Christian Observer*, Oct. 1857, p. 707.

We have as yet seen only one side of Lady Huntingdon's energy; she was no less industrious in providing hearers for her preachers, than preachers for her hearers.[1] She almost rivalled John Wesley himself in the influence which she exercised over her preachers; and she was as far removed as he was from any love of power for power's sake, although, like him, she constantly had this accusation brought against her. The extent of her power cannot be better stated than in the words of her biographer: 'Her ladyship erected or possessed herself of chapels in various parts of the kingdom, in which she appointed such persons to officiate as ministers as she thought fit, revoking such appointments at her pleasure. Congregations who worshipped here were called "Lady Huntingdon's Connexion," and the ministers who officiated "ministers in Lady Huntingdon's Connexion." Over the affairs of this Connexion Lady Huntingdon exercised a *moral* power to the time of her death; not only appointing and removing the ministers who officiated, but appointing laymen in each congregation to superintend its secular concerns, called the "committee of management."'[2]

The first thing that obviously occurs to one in reference to this position is, that it should more properly belong to a man than a woman. Even in women of the strongest understanding and the deepest and widest culture, there is generally a want of ballast which unfits them for such a responsibility; and Lady Huntingdon was not a lady of a strong understanding, and still less of a deep and wide culture. But she possessed what was better still—a single eye to her Master's glory, a truly humble mind, and genuine piety. The possession of these graces prevented her from falling into more errors than she did. Still, it is certainly somewhat beyond a woman's sphere to order Christian ministers about thus: 'Now, Wren, I charge you to be faithful, and to deliver a faithful message in all the congregations.' 'My lady,' said Wren, 'they will not bear it.' She rejoined, 'I will stand by you.'[3] On another occasion she happened to have two

[1] Indeed, Lady Huntingdon appears to have been the originator of lay preaching among the Methodists. Of Maxwell, the first lay preacher, she wrote to John Wesley: 'The first time I *made him* expound, expecting little from him, I sat over against him,' &c.—See *Life and Times of Lady Huntingdon*, i. 33.

[2] *Life of Lady Huntingdon*, ii. 490. [3] Id. i. 309.

ministers in her house, 'when it occurred to her that one of them should preach. Notice was accordingly sent round that on such an evening there would be preaching before the door. At the appointed time a great many people had collected together, which the young men, seeing, inquired what it meant. Her ladyship said, "As I have two preachers in my house, one of you must preach to the people." In reply, they said that they had never preached publicly, and wished to be excused. Shipman was ready, Matthews diffident. Lady Huntingdon, therefore, judged it best for Mr. Shipman to make the first attempt. While he hesitated she put a Bible into his hand, insisting upon his appearing before the people, and either telling them that he was afraid to trust in God, or to do the best he could. On the servant's opening the door, her ladyship thrust him out with her blessing, "The Lord be with you—do the best you can."'[1] At Trevecca—a college which she founded and supported solely at her own expense—her will was law. 'Trevecca,' wrote John Wesley,[2] 'is much more to Lady Huntingdon than Kingswood is to me. *I* mixes with everything. It is *my* college, *my* masters, *my* students!' When the unhappy Calvinistic controversy broke out in 1770, Lady Huntingdon proclaimed that whoever did not wholly disavow the Minutes should quit her college; and she fully acted up to her proclamation.[3] Fletcher's resignation was accepted, and Benson, the able head-master, was removed. John Wesley himself was no longer suffered to preach in any of her pulpits.

Her commands, however, were not always obeyed. Thus, for instance, we find Berridge good-naturedly rallying her on a peremptory summons he had received to 'supply' her chapel at Brighton. 'You threaten me, madam, like a pope, not like a mother in Israel, when you declare roundly that God will scourge me if I do not come; but I know your ladyship's good meaning, and this menace was not despised. It made me slow in resolving. Whilst I was looking towards the sea, partly drawn thither with the hope of doing good, and partly driven by your *Vatican Bull*, I found nothing but thorns in my way, &c.'[4] On a similar occasion the same good

[1] *Life of Lady Huntingdon*, ii. 126, note.
[2] Id. ii. 325.
[3] Id. ii. 236.
[4] Id. i. 324.

man writes to her with that execrably bad taste for which he was even more conspicuous than Whitefield:[1] 'Jesus has been whispering to me of late that I cannot keep myself nor the flock committed to me; but has not hinted a word as yet that I do wrong in keeping to my fold. And my instructions, you know, must come from the Lamb, not from the Lamb's wife, though she is a tight woman.' John Wesley plainly told her that, though he loved her well, it could not continue if it depended upon his seeing with her eyes.[2] Rowland Hill rebelled against her authority.[3]

These, however, were exceptional cases. As a rule, Lady Huntingdon was in far more danger of being spoiled by flattery than of being discouraged by rebuffs. Poor Whitefield's painful adulation of his patroness has been already alluded to; and it was but natural that the students at her college, who owed their all to her, should, in after life, have been inclined to treat her with too great subservience.

One is thankful to find no traces of undue deference on the part of those parochial clergymen who were made her chaplains, and who at irregular intervals, when they could be spared from their own parishes, supplied her chapels. But though these good men did not flatter her, they felt and expressed the greatest respect for her character and exertions, as did also the Methodists generally. Fletcher described an interview with her in terms which sound rather overstrained, not to say irreverent, to English ears; but allowance should be made for the 'effusion' in which foreigners are wont to indulge. 'Our conversation,' he writes to Charles Wesley,[4] 'was deep and full of the energy of faith. As to me, I sat

[1] *Life of Lady Huntingdon*, ii. 20. [2] Id. ii. 317.

[3] Id. ii. 318.—'He was,' writes Lady Huntingdon, 'as my own son received into my house, preached in my pulpits, and, as far as I know, a single offence he never had given him. All this [his opposing her party in argument], though not fair and upright, I should have so far despised as for peace' sake to have passed over; but the worm that still lies at the bottom of the gourd is his taking us all up into the pulpit as his merry andrews, and, through his evil jokes, leaving a sting behind.' Mr. Sidney, Rowland Hill's biographer, writes: 'Though he always treated her memory with respect, and vindicated her character against aspersions during the Wesleyan controversy, I think he was not one of her ladyship's most cordial admirers. The mode in which she exercised her authority was not suited to a mind impatient of restraint.'

[4] Id. i. 220.

like Paul at the feet of Gamaliel; I passed three hours with a modern prodigy—*a pious and humble countess.* I went with trembling and in obedience to your orders; but I soon perceived a little of what the disciples felt when Christ said to them, *It is I—be not afraid.*' John Wesley, in spite of his differences with her, owned that 'she was much devoted to God and had a thousand valuable and amiable qualities.' Rowland Hill, when a young man, wrote in still stronger terms: 'I am glad to hear the *Head* is better. What zeal for God perpetually attends her! Had I twenty bodies, I could like nineteen of them to run about for her.'[1]

The good countess was not unworthy of all this esteem. In spite of her little foibles, she was a thoroughly earnest Christian woman. Her munificence was unbounded. 'She would give,' said Grimshaw, 'to the last gown on her back.' She is said to have spent during her life more than 100,000*l.* in the service of religion.

Lady Huntingdon's Connexion, like John Wesley's societies, drifted away rather than separated from the National Church. The separation, if separation it can be called, in Lady Huntingdon's case took place earlier than in that of John Wesley; but the occasion of both was the same. In consequence of some litigation in the Consistorial Court of London about the Spa Fields Chapel, it became necessary to define more precisely the 'status' of Lady Huntingdon's places of worship. If they were still to be considered as belonging to the Church of England, they were, of course, bound to submit to the laws of the Church. In order to find shelter under the Toleration Act, it was necessary to register them as Dissenting places of worship. Thus Lady Huntingdon, much against her will, found herself a Dissenter. She expressed her regret in that extraordinary English which she was wont to write. 'All the other connexions seem to be at peace, and I have ever found to belong to me while we were at ease in Zion. I am to be cast out of the Church now, only for what I have been doing these forty years—speaking and living for Jesus Christ; and if the days of my captivity are now to be accomplished, those that turn me out,

[1] *Life of the Rev. Rowland Hill*, by the Rev. E. Sidney, p. 65.

and so set me at liberty, may soon feel what it is, by sore distress themselves for those hard services they have caused me.'[1] Still she could not make up her mind to call herself and those in connexion with her, Dissenters. She tried to find some middle term; it was not a separation from the Church, but a 'secession;' which looks very like a distinction without a difference. 'Our ministers must come,' writes her ladyship in 1781, 'recommended by that neutrality between Church and Dissent—secession;' and to the same effect in 1782: 'Mr. Wills's secession from the Church (for which he is the most highly favoured of all from the noble and disinterested motives that engaged his honest and faithful conscience for the Lord's unlimited service) brings about an ordination of such students as are alike disposed to labour in the place and appointed for those congregations. The method of these appears the best calculated for the comfort of the students and to serve the congregations most usefully, and is contrived to prevent any bondage to the people or minister. The objections to the Dissenters' plan are many, and to the Church more; that secession means the neutrality between both, and so materially offensive to neither.'[2]

One result of this 'secession' was the withdrawal from the Connexion of those parochial clergymen who had given their gratuitous services to Lady Huntingdon—Romaine, Venn, Townsend, and others; but they still maintained the most cordial intimacy with the countess, and continued occasionally to supply her chapels.

It must be admitted, in justice to the Church rulers of the day, that the difficulties in the way of co-operation with Lady Huntingdon were by no means slight. Her Churchmanship, like that of her friend Whitefield, was not of the same marked type as that of John Wesley. It will be remembered that John Wesley, in his sermon at the foundation of the City Road Chapel in 1777—four years, be it observed, before Lady Huntingdon's secession—described, in his own vigorous language, the difference between the attitude of *his* followers towards the Church, and that of the followers of Lady Huntingdon and Mr. Whitefield. So far as the two latter were concerned, he did not overstate the case. The college

[1] *Life of Lady Huntingdon*, ii. 315. [2] Id. ii. 467.

at Trevecca could hardly be regarded in any other light than that of a Dissenting Academy. Berridge saw this, and wrote to Lady Huntingdon: 'However rusty or rickety the Dissenters may appear to you, God hath His remnant among them; therefore lift not up your hand against them for the Lord's sake nor yet for consistency's sake, because your students are as real Dissenting preachers as any in the land, unless a gown and band can make a clergyman. The bishops look on your students as the worst kind of Dissenters; and manifest this by refusing that ordination to your preachers which would be readily granted to other teachers among the Dissenters.'[1] Berridge also thought that the Wesleyans would not retain their position as Churchmen. In the very same year (1777) in which Wesley gloried in the adhesion of his societies to the Church, Berridge wrote to Lady Huntingdon: 'What will become of your students at your decease? They are virtual Dissenters now, and will be settled Dissenters then. And the same will happen to many, perhaps most, of Mr. Wesley's preachers at his death. He rules like a real Alexander, and is now stepping forth with a flaming torch; but we do not read in history of two Alexanders succeeding each other.'[2]

But to return to Trevecca. The rules of the college specified that the students after three years' residence might, if they desired, enter the ministry either of the Church or any other Protestant denomination. Now, as Trevecca was essentially a theological college, it is hardly possible to conceive that the theology taught there could have been so colourless as not to bias the students in favour either of the Church or of Dissent; and as the Church, in spite of her laxity, still retained her liturgy, creeds, and other forms, which were more dogmatic and precise than those of any Dissenting body, such a training as that of Trevecca would naturally result, as the Vicar of Everton predicted, in making the students, to all intents and purposes, Dissenters. The only wonder is that Lady Huntingdon's Connexion should have retained so strong an attachment to the Church as they undoubtedly did, and that, not only during her own lifetime, but after her

[1] Gledstone's *Life of Whitefield*, p. 465.
[2] *Life of Lady Huntingdon*, ii. 423.

death. 'You ask,' wrote Dr. Haweis to one who desired information on this point,[1] 'of what Church we profess ourselves? We desire to be esteemed as members of Christ's Catholic and Apostolic Church, and essentially one with the Church of England, of which we regard ourselves as living members. . . . The doctrines we subscribe (for we require subscription, and, what is better, they are always truly preached by us) are those of the Church of England in the literal and grammatical sense. Nor is the liturgy of the Church of England performed more devoutly in any Church,' &c.

The five worthy Christians whose characters and careers have been briefly sketched were the chief promoters of what may be termed the Methodist, as distinguished from the Evangelical, movement, in the technical sense of that epithet. As all alike, belonging to both sections of the movement, were termed by their contemporaries Methodists, so all alike are included under the general head of the 'Evangelical Revival.' The points of contact, as well as the points of difference, between the two bodies, will be noticed presently. Of those who took a prominent part in the earlier movement it is not necessary to write more. Not but that there were many others who would be worthy of a place in a larger history. Thomas Walsh, Wesley's most honoured friend; Dr. Coke ('a second Walsh,' Wesley called him), who sacrificed a good position and a considerable fortune entirely to the Methodist cause; Mr. Perronet, the excellent Vicar of Shoreham, to whom both the brothers Wesley had recourse in every important crisis, and who was called by Charles Wesley 'the Archbishop of Methodism;' Sir John Thorold, a pious Lincolnshire baronet; John Nelson, the worthy stonemason of Birstal, who was pressed as a soldier simply because he was a Methodist, and whose death John Wesley thus records in his Journal: 'This day died John Nelson, and left a wig and half-a-crown—as much as any unmarried minister ought to leave;' Sampson Stainforth, Mark Bond, and John Haine, the Methodist soldiers who infused a spirit of Methodism in the British Army; Howell Harris, the life and soul of Welsh Methodism; Thomas Olivers, the converted reprobate, who rode one hundred thousand miles on one horse in the cause of

[1] *Life of Lady Huntingdon*, ii. 521.

Methodism, and who was considered by John Wesley as a strong enough man to be pitted against the ablest champions of Calvinism; John Pawson, Alexander Mather, and other worthy men—of humble birth, it may be, and scanty acquirements, but earnest, devoted Christians—would all deserve to be noticed in a professed history of Methodism. In a brief sketch, like the present, all that can be said of them is, 'Cum tales essent, utinam nostri fuissent.'

Before passing on to another branch of our subject a difficult question here presents itself. If these good men were really such as they have been represented—if they were enemies of the Constitution neither in Church nor State, but, on the contrary, ardently attached to both; if their sole quarrel was with sin and Satan, a quarrel in which all right-minded men would heartily join them; if they were not only God-fearing and God-loving men, but also men of most lovable characters, men who burned with an ardent and all-embracing charity—how is it that they were so generally unpopular as they undoubtedly were?

The question is so important that, at the risk of wearying the reader's patience, it will be necessary to discuss it at some length.

Let us first, then, see who were the opponents of the Methodists. Of such riots as those at Hampton, Birstal, Walsall, Wednesbury, and Devizes—some of them, one blushes to relate, instigated by the clergy—little need be said. To attempt to account for the fury of a mob is an utterly hopeless task. Probably, as at Ephesus of old, 'the more part of them knew not wherefore they were come together,'—all the more shame to those who took advantage of the people's ignorance to instigate them to deeds of violence. The behaviour of such educated ruffians as Egginton and Cadogan carries its own explanation and its own condemnation with it; but all the enemies of the Methodists were not men of this stamp. Take, for example, such a man as Hogarth. His talents were all enlisted on the side of virtue against vice. A strong moral purpose runs through all his admirable pictures. The 'Industrious and Idle Apprentices' and the 'Harlot's Progress' were, in their way, doing the work of Wesley and Whitefield; and yet one is grieved to think that the

last work of Hogarth, the picture entitled 'Credulity, Superstition, and Fanaticism,' was drawn expressly to caricature and counteract the effects of the preaching of Wesley and Whitefield.[1] Take, again, Dr. Johnson, that sworn foe of vice and irreligion. He respected John Wesley and loved his society, and he was just enough to own that Colley Cibber's play, the 'Hypocrite,' was not applicable to the Methodists;'[2] but how contemptuously he speaks of his fellow-collegian! 'Whitefield,' he said,[3] 'never drew as much attention as a mountebank does; he did not draw attention by doing better than others, but by doing what was strange. I never treated Whitefield's ministry with contempt; I believe he did good; he had devoted himself to the lower classes of mankind, and among them he was of use. But when familiarity and noise claim the praise due to knowledge, art, and elegance, we must beat down such pretensions.' With what perverse ingenuity he defends one of the most unjustifiable of all the outrages perpetrated against the Methodists, the expulsion of the six students from St. Edmund's Hall in 1768! 'Sir, that expulsion was extremely just and proper. What have they to do at a university who are not willing to be taught, but presume to teach? Sir, they were examined and found to be ignorant fellows. They might be good beings, but they were not fit to be at Oxford. A cow is a very good animal in a field, but we turn her out of a garden.'[4] What evidence is there that these young men, who were expelled from Oxford simply because they would not desist from praying and exhorting in private rooms, were unwilling to be taught, or that they were at all fairly examined and found inferior to the general run of students? Lord Northington, speaking from the judicial bench—a place where of all others language ought to be calm and measured—said, in pronouncing judgment against a Methodist preacher: 'Bigotry and enthusiasm have spread their baneful influence among us far and wide, and the unhappy objects of the contagion almost daily increase. Of this not only Bedlam but most of the private mad-houses

[1] Nor was this the only attack he made upon the Methodists.
[2] Boswell's *Johnson*, v. 260.
[3] Id. vii. 293.
Id. iii. *aa finem.*

are melancholy and striking proofs.'[1] Or, to turn to another class of evidence—that of contemporary or nearly contemporary historians—this is the way in which Tindal, in his 'Continuation of Rapin's History up to the Present Time' (1763), speaks of the Methodists:—'This year [1739] was distinguished by the institution of a set of fanatics under the name of Methodists, of which one Whitefield, a young clergyman, was the founder. . . . Striking in with the common fanatical jargon and practices of enthusiasm, he soon found himself at the head of such a number of disciples as might have been dangerous to the public repose, had they attempted to disturb it.' After owning the loyalty of the Methodists, he adds: 'The Established clergy, instead of imitating the practice of former times, were far from persecuting himself and his followers, and wisely treated him at first with reserve and afterwards with silent contempt. This moderation had not the desired effect; it set the founder to encroach on parochial churches without the consent of the incumbents, to the great danger of the peace of society.'[2] This is the way in which Smollett, who wrote about the same period, described them:—'Imposture and fanaticism still hung upon the skirts of religion. Weak minds were seduced by the delusion of a superstition styled Methodism, raised upon the affectation of superior sanctity and maintained by pretensions to Divine illumination. Many thousands in the lower ranks of life were infected with this enthusiasm by the unwearied exertions of a few obscure preachers, such as Whitefield and the two Wesleys.'[3]

It will be seen that all the evidence quoted has been lay evidence. Clerical evidence might be suspected of prejudice. Professional jealousy of the irregular workers might account for the hard judgment of the clergy upon them. Still, will anyone seriously contend that men of deep Christian conviction, like Bishop Benson, Bishop Gibson (whom, in spite of his bitter antagonism, John Wesley, with a noble generosity, described as 'a great man, who is, I trust, now in a better world,' and 'a man eminent for piety and learning'), Bishops Horne, Secker and Horsley, and Dr. Waterland, deliberately

[1] *Lives of the Chancellors*, by Lord Campbell, vol. v. ch. cxxxix. p. 191.

[2] *Continuation of Rapin's History of England from the Revolution to the Present Time*, by N. Tindal, vol. xvii. (v. of continuation), p. 439.

[3] Smollett's *Continuation of Hume*, in five vols. v. 375.

opposed Methodism, although they knew it to be a work of God? The hostility of such men as Bishops Lavington, Warburton, and Hurd was of a different character from that of the prelates above mentioned; but no unprejudiced person can think that in opposing Methodism they were consciously fighting against God.

Nor was it only the Church which as a body was hostile to Methodism. In the journals of both the Wesleys and of Whitefield we find constant reference to the opposition of Dissenting ministers. The amiable Doddridge, who was perhaps a little too anxious to please everybody, was evidently embarrassed by the friendship of Whitefield. He had not the heart to exclude him from his house, or even from his pulpit, at Northampton, but he plainly lets us see that it would have been much more satisfactory to him if his inconvenient friend had kept at a distance. But even the half-hearted sanction which Doddridge accorded to the Methodist drew upon him the severe displeasure of his Dissenting brethren.[1] Dr. Watts, though he afterwards became friendly with Lady Huntingdon and the Methodist leaders, strongly disapproved of Doddridge's conduct, and rebuked him roundly, on the ground that he was losing caste by his intimacy with Whitefield. 'I am sorry,' he writes, 'that since your departure I have had many questions asked me about your preaching in the Tabernacle, and sinking the character of a minister, and especially of a tutor, so low thereby. I find many of our friends entertain this idea; but I can give no answer, as not knowing how much you have been engaged there. I pray God to guard us from every temptation.'[2] Whitefield's biographer thus describes the opposition he met with from Dissenters:—'Bradbury lampooned him, Barker sneered at him, Watts was silent, Coward's trustees were insolent to Doddridge because he countenanced him.' They called him 'honest, crazy, confident Whitefield; Doddridge was obliged to assure his friends that he saw no danger that any of his pupils would prove Methodists.' Neal wrote to Doddridge on his commendation of Whitefield's sermon, saying that 'he could not reconcile it with the low,

[1] See *Life of Lady Huntingdon*, i. 137, 139, 200.

[2] Philip's *Life of Whitefield*, pp. 262, 263.

incoherent stuff he used to hear him utter at Kennington Common.'[1] Doddridge replied that he must look upon it as an unhappy circumstance that Whitefield came to Northampton when he did, as he perceived that, in conjunction with other circumstances, it had filled town and country with astonishment and indignation. The Wesleys, being far stricter Churchmen than Whitefield, do not appear to have embarrassed the Dissenters with any overtures of friendship; but, had they done so, there is little doubt that they would have been regarded with the same suspicion as Whitefield.

In short, outside their own circle the early Methodists were almost universally disliked and despised. The only places where they could get common justice done them were in the higher secular courts and at the Royal Palace. John Wesley did not go one whit beyond the truth when, in his 'Loyal Address to the King' in 1744, he described the Methodists as 'a people scattered and peeled and trodden under foot.' In his 'Earnest Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion' (a short piece, but one of the most telling he ever wrote) he asks: 'What evil have we done to you, that you should join the common cry against us? Why should you say, "Away with such fellows from the earth! It is not fit that they should live"?'[2] In his 'Farther Appeal,' he asks with real pathos: 'Is there one writer that has reproved us with love? Bring it to a single point. "Love hopeth all things." If you had loved us in any degree you would have hoped that God would some time give us the knowledge of the truth. But where shall we find even this slender instance of love? Has not everyone who has wrote at all (I do not remember so much as one exception) treated us as incorrigible? Brethren, how is this? Why do ye labour to teach us an evil lesson against yourselves? Oh, may God never suffer others to deal with you as ye have dealt with us!'[3] And again: 'Warm men cry out to the people, wherever one of us comes, "A mad dog! a mad dog!" if haply we might fly for our lives, as many have done before us.' In fact, the whole treatise gives

[1] Gledstone's *Life of Whitefield*, pp. 324, 326.
[2] *Earnest Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion*, p. 6.
[3] *Farther Appeal*, p. 108.

an admirable illustration, set forth in that pathetic and forcible language which Wesley knew so well how to write, of the way in which the Methodists were treated. When John Pawson showed some inclination towards Methodism, his father, who was a worthy, respectable man, warned him that 'the Methodists were so universally hated that it would ruin his character to go among them.'

But it is needless to multiply proofs of a fact which must be perfectly patent to all who have even a superficial acquaintance with the history of the times. Admitting, then, the fact, how are we to account for it?

Their case has been compared with that of the early Christians, who were 'made as the filth of the earth and the offscouring of all things.' But, in point of fact, the hostility to the first Christians is more easily accounted for than that displayed to the first Methodists. There is no difficulty in seeing how the doctrine of the Cross would be to the Jews a stumbling-block and to the Greeks foolishness. But why should it have been so with the Methodists? The Christian religion, according to the doctrines and forms of the Church of England, was unquestionably the religion for which, in theory at least, the vast majority of the nation had an unfeigned predilection. The Methodists believed every one of those doctrines, and desired to alter not one of those forms. 'Where,' writes John Wesley in his 'Farther Appeal,' 'is there a body of people in the realm who, number for number, so closely adhere to what our Church delivers as pure doctrine? Where are those who have been approved, and do approve themselves, more orthodox, more sound in their opinions?'

The luxury, and apathy, and eagerness for preferment, especially of the higher clergy, were general subjects of complaint. The Methodists obviously possessed just those very qualities the lack or supposed lack of which in the rulers of the Church was causing such grievous discontent. They were undeniably frugal and temperate in their lives, most energetic in their work, and not only careless about, but utterly unwilling to accept, any preferment. The profligacy and vice of the lower orders not only shocked the feelings but endangered the safety of the public. The Methodists were obviously doing the very work which was needed,

and which other agencies had proved impotent to effect. They could point to living arguments in their favour. To quote once more from Wesley's 'Appeal,'[1] 'the drunkard commenced sober and temperate; the whoremonger abstained from adultery and fornication, the unjust from oppression and wrong; he that had been accustomed to curse and swear for many years now swore no more; the sluggard began to work with his hands, that he might eat his own bread; the miser learned to deal his bread to the hungry and to cover the naked with a garment. Indeed, the whole form of their life was changed; they had left off doing evil and learned to do well.' And yet the very men who were yearning for such a change in the public morals were bitterly hostile to the party, and the only party, who by their lives and teaching were remedying the very grievances complained of.

What were the causes of this hostility?

1. One of the chief causes may, perhaps, be found in a fact which has so often been referred to in this work that an apology is needed for referring to it again. It is this: that after the many changes and turbulent discussions, both in the religious and the political world, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the nation in the eighteenth century was above all things anxious for quiet. Now, 'quiet' was the very last epithet that could be applied to the early Methodists. Their incessant bodily restlessness was but a picture of their mental and spiritual activity. To 'rest and be thankful' was the very last thing that they desired. They were unpopular from the very same cause which brought about the unpopularity of the Deists. Utterly dissimilar as the two parties were in most respects, they were alike in this: that neither was content to let things alone.[2] So much has been said on this point elsewhere that it need merely be touched upon here; only it must be fully taken into account in estimating the unpopularity of Methodism.

2. The Methodists contrived to arouse suspicion on two points apparently very dissimilar, about which the English

[1] *Farther Appeal*, pp. 196, 198.

[2] Bishop Gibson in one of his pastorals classes the Methodists with the Deists, Papists, and 'other disturbers of the kingdom of God.' The expression 'disturbers' illustrates what is said above.

people in the eighteenth century were peculiarly sensitive. They were suspected of desiring to reintroduce, sometimes Puritanism, and sometimes Romanism, and England was determined to have neither the one nor the other.

The points of agreement between Methodism and Puritanism were of course obvious enough. Whitefield in especial expressed a strong sympathy with the old Puritans, whose memory he had learned to love in America. And though the Wesleys' tone of mind was in many respects utterly antagonistic to Puritanism, there were not wanting superficial resemblances between the two systems. At any rate, as a matter of fact, all the Methodists were suspected of a wish to revive the spirit of the Puritanism of the seventeenth century, the strong reaction against which had by no means died out. 'The nonsensical new light,' wrote Horace Walpole in 1748, 'is extremely in fashion, and I shall not be surprised if we see all the cant and folly of the last age.'[1] 'I have been lately reading,' wrote Warburton, 'the trials and last behaviour of the Regicides. They were mostly, you know, enthusiasts, but, what surprised me, of the same kind with the Methodists. . . . The wicked actions of the Regicides will not suffer us to think their spirit was of God. The moral lives of the Methodists will not suffer us to think theirs of the Devil. What is left but to conclude both a natural enthusiasm? Though the Methodists ought not to be persecuted, yet that the clergy are right in giving no encouragement to this spirit appears from the dismal effects it produced among the fanatics in Charles I.'s time, who began with the same meekness and humility with these.'[2] 'Thousands,' wrote

[1] *Letters of Horace Walpole*, Letter written Sept. 3, 1748. Archdeacon Balguy, in his charge at Winchester in 1760, seems to allude specially to Whitefield and his party when he speaks of the 'growth of the modern sect of Puritans, who to all the nonsense of a Calvinistical creed have added the chimerical claims to inspiration.' This cannot apply to Wesley.

[2] Nichol's *Literary Illustrations of the Eighteenth Century*, Letter from Warburton to the Rev. C. Birch. He writes to the same correspondent: 'I tell you what I think would be the best way of exposing these idle fanatics—the printing passages out of George Fox's journal, and Ignatius Loyola and Whitefield's journals in parallel columns. Their conformity in folly is amazing.' And to Peter des Maizeaux: 'What think you of our new set of fanatics, called the Methodists? I have seen Whitefield's journal, and he appears to me as mad as ever George Fox, the Quaker, was. There i another of them, one Wesley,' &c.

Bogue and Bennett,[1] 'expressed their delight to see Puritanism revived by a minister of the Church of England. Whitefield found himself at home among these descendants of the Puritans.'

The charge of Popery, strange as it may seem, was even more frequently and with greater effect brought against the Methodists than the charge of Puritanism. What possible reason there could be for bringing such a charge against Whitefield and his followers it is difficult to discover. It looks like a mere calling of names, with no more meaning in it than when Daniel O'Connell called an old woman 'a parallelogram.' 'If I am a Roman Catholic,' said Whitefield, 'the Pope must have given me a large dispensation.'[2] Against the Wesleys the charge might be brought with some better show of reason. As we have already seen, John Wesley in especial showed certain proclivities which even at the present day would be thought by some (though most unjustly) to savour of Romanism. But, curiously enough, it does not appear to have been these things which were generally fastened upon as the grounds on which Wesley was accused of Popery. In 1744 both the brothers were suspected, without the slightest reason, of favouring Popery and the Pretender. A ridiculous accusation was laid against Charles Wesley of having spoken treasonable words, and witnesses were summoned before the magistrates at Wakefield to depose against him. He had prayed 'the Lord to bring home His banished ones,' and some believed, or pretended to believe, that he referred to the Jacobites. The charge was too absurd to be substantiated even before the most prejudiced tribunal. But the panic did not cease. 'Every Sunday,' says Charles Wesley, 'damnation is denounced against us, for we are Papists, Jesuits, seducers, and bringers-in of the Pretender.' In fact, so strong was the feeling on the point that, when a proclamation was issued commanding all Romanists to leave London, John Wesley thought it expedient to postpone a journey and remain in town, lest he should be suspected of having quitted in con-

[1] *History of Dissenters* (1810), vol. iii. p. 31. See also Warburton's *Doctrin of Grace*, vol. iv. of Warburton's *Works* in vii. vols., p. 644.

[2] Philip's *Life of Whitefield*, p. 357.

sequence of the proclamation. Bishop Lavington's elaborate comparison between the 'Enthusiasm of Methodists and Papists' proved, in the author's opinion, the tendency of Methodism to demonstration. He was convinced that 'the peregrinations of the Methodists would lead them to Rome, whither they seemed to be setting their faces.'[1] 'Your progress,' he wrote to Wesley, 'is that of a crab, directly backwards. Nor can I discern any perfection but the perfection of Jesuitism.' 'We may see,' he writes again, 'in Mr. Wesley's writings that he was once a strict Churchman, but has gradually relaxed and put on a more Catholic spirit, tending at length to Roman Catholicism. People of every communion are among his disciples, and he rejects with indignation any design to convert others from any communion, and therefore not from Popery.' If any further explanation of the phenomena of Methodism were required, the Bishop has no difficulty in assigning their origin; he tells us in downright terms, without the slightest circumlocution, that they come from the Devil.[2] Warburton 'saw the exact resemblance there was between his [Wesley's] saints and those of the Church of Rome at the time of the new birth.' 'This,' he thinks, 'might lead reflecting men to conclude that the original of both was the same.' Bishop Smalbroke, in his charge to the clergy at Lichfield in 1746, declares that 'if the false doctrines of the Methodists prevail, they must unavoidably create a general disorder in our Constitution, and, if so, favour the return of Popery itself.' Southey thinks that their fasting on a Friday gave occasion to the report that Wesley's followers were Papists.[3] Dr. Scott wrote in 1743:

[1] Bishop Lavington's *Enthusiasm of Methodists and Papists Considered* (new ed., with introduction, &c., by Rev. R. Polwhele; London, Whittaker & Co., 1833), p. xxxvii.

[2] Mr. Polwhele says in his introduction: 'I really think it would scarcely be uncandid to resort to the sacred text for a definition of a Methodist—τὰς, μεθοδείας τοῦ διαβόλου—methodism of the Devil.' And Bishop Lavington: 'If there be anything in the mysterious part of Methodism exceeding the powers of nature, known or secret, &c., I see no reason against contending that it is the work of some evil spirit, a sort of magical operation or other diabolical illusion.' Pp. 397–8. Warburton, in his *Doctrine of Grace*, p. 648, writes in the same spirit.

[3] 'Wesley would have revived a practice which had fallen into disuse throughout all the Reformed Churches, as being little congenial to the spirit of the

'One of these artful teachers has ordered the tickets for his people to be impressed with the crucifix; and this, with their *confessions* and other customs, intimates a manifest fondness for the institutions of the *Church of Rome*.'[1]

John Wesley had hardly patience to answer these ridiculous imputations. With natural indignation he brushes them aside with the simple argument: 'O ye fools, whosoever ye are, high or low, Dissenters or Churchmen, clergy or laity, who have advanced this shameless charge, when will ye understand that the preaching of justification by faith alone, the allowing no meritorious cause of justification but the death and righteousness of Christ, and no conditional or instrumental cause but faith, is overturning Popery from the foundation?'[2]

3. Some of the charges brought against the Methodists were better grounded than those already noticed. When men's feelings are roused to a high pitch of excitement, it is not always easy to keep them within the bounds of prudence and reason. That extravagances accompanied the early spread of Methodism, that results sometimes followed which savoured of the rankest fanaticism, and which were positively noxious both to the souls and bodies of those who were possessed, few will deny. The leaders of the revival themselves owned it. 'In England some time ago,' wrote Whitefield in 1741, 'many young persons ran out before they were called; others were guilty of great imprudences. I checked them in the strictest manner myself, and found, as they grew acquainted with the Lord Jesus and their own hearts, the intemperance of their zeal abated, and they became truly humble walkers in God. But must the whole work of God be condemned as enthusiasm and delusion because of some disorder?'[3] John Wesley thought 'the danger *was* to regard extraordinary circumstances too much, such as outcries, con-

Reformation. The society at Bristol passed a resolution that all the members should obey the Church to which they belonged by observing all Fridays in the year as days of fasting or abstinence. This probably gave currency, if it did not occasion, a report that he was a Papist, if not a Jesuit.'—Southey's *Life of Wesley*, i. 175; see also pp. 278, 279.

[1] Tyerman's *Life of Wesley*, i. 428.

[2] *Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion*, p. 30.

[3] Whitefield's *Letters*, and Gledstone's *Life of Whitefield*, p. 295.

vulsions, visions, trances; as if these were essential to the inward work, so that it could not go on without them.' He admitted that 'in some nature mixed with grace,' and that 'Satan mimicked this work of God;' 'yet,' he adds very justly, 'the shadow is no disparagement of the substance, nor the counterfeit of the real diamond.'[1] In 1763 he wisely advised those who professed perfection to 'beware of that daughter of pride, enthusiasm. Do not hastily ascribe things to God. Do not easily suppose dreams, voices, and impressions to be from God. They may be from Him; they may be from nature; they may be from the Devil. Try all by the written word.'

In reference to the wild extravagances of Maxfield and Bell, which arose from a perversion of Wesley's favourite doctrine of Christian perfection, Fletcher of Madeley wrote: 'Allowing that what is reported is one-half mere exaggeration, one-tenth of the rest shows that spiritual pride, presumption, arrogance, stubbornness, party spirit, uncharitableness, prophetic mistakes—in short, that *every sinew* of enthusiasm is now at work in many of that body.'[2] One can easily conceive how in an age which was morbidly sensitive about anything which it vaguely called enthusiasm, which was suspicious of whatever tended to disturb the prevailing quiet, reports of cases of fanaticism would be made the worst of, and would be eagerly spread, and, though the exception, not the rule, might throw discredit upon the whole movement. Methodism got the reputation of driving men mad, and the reputation was not wholly undeserved. People who, had they known such men as the Wesleys, Whitefield, and Fletcher, would have respected them, even if they could not altogether agree with them, learnt to shrink from them as pestilent and seditious fellows, who would turn the world upside down, and who deserved to be crushed as nuisances to society.

4. The leaders of Methodism, although they resolutely set their faces against these wild extravagances, as soon as ever they recognised them, were yet perhaps not altogether the

[1] Written in reference to the physical symptoms in Berridge's church Everton.—See Southey's *Life of Wesley*, ii. 151.

[2] See *Life of Lady Huntingdon*, i. 320.

men who were adapted to stay the evil. Whitefield, besides being a rash, impulsive man, without much discrimination or good judgment, was also a hardly strong enough man to lay the spirit which he had raised, or to keep it within due bounds. John Wesley, a far stronger man than Whitefield, could doubtless have more easily checked the extravagances of his disciples; but unfortunately his very virtues sometimes disqualified him for estimating the true state of the case. He was always ready to hope for the best of everyone; he had a strong tendency from his youth upwards to believe too readily in the intervention of the supernatural. Guileless and truthful as the day himself, he was willing to believe that others were like him, and hence he not seldom became the dupe of designing knaves and plausible hypocrites.

5. The theology of early Methodism was a very crude theology. It pronounced dogmatically upon deep questions which had puzzled far more thoughtful and better-read men. This weakness of early Methodism disgusted some who were by no means inclined to sanction the injustice with which the Methodists were treated. Thus good Bishop Horne strongly disapproved of the unjust expulsion of the six students from Oxford, and was a warm friend of some of the later Evangelicals, but he was prejudiced against the Methodists on this ground. 'What wonder,' he said in a sermon preached before the University of Oxford in 1761, 'Antinomianism is rampant when men, instead of having recourse to the catholic doctors of the ancient Church, extract their theology from the latest and lowest of our sectaries; if, instead of drawing living water from the fresh springs of primitive antiquity, they take such as comes to them at second hand from Geneva; and Clement and Ignatius pass for moderate divines compared to the new lights of the Tabernacle and the Foundry?'[1] Archbishop Secker and Bishop Horsley disapproved of the Methodists on the same grounds; both recognised freely the element of good that was in them, but they thought, as the latter expressed it, that they were 'men more to be esteemed for the warmth of their piety than for the soundness of their

[1] *John Wesley and the Evangelical Reaction of the Eighteenth Century*, by Julia Wedgwood, p. 322. This, by the way, is one of the very ablest and most thoughtful accounts of the revival which has ever been published.

judgment.'[1] There was certainly much in Methodism to repel thoughtful men like these; but perhaps they did not sufficiently take into account the fact that intellectual crudities and inconsistencies which would disgust men of high culture and extensive learning would pass quite unnoticed among the multitude.

6. The bitter feeling against the Methodists was greatly intensified by their persistent determination not to leave the Church. Warburton, in his 'Doctrine of Grace,' argues: 'If we show ourselves thus rightly disposed in favour of this Divine principle of toleration, when the law hath left offenders against Church government to the justice of its rulers, much more shall we be disposed to suffer the honest sectary, who hath legally qualified himself for the enjoyment of his religious liberty, to possess it without trouble or control.' The learned Bishop, however, had a little forgotten this 'Divine principle of toleration' when he justified in the same treatise, a few pages earlier, the hard measures dealt to the Methodists in this trenchant fashion:—'Sectaries must either kick or be kicked. They must either persecute or provoke persecution. To live in this turbulent state is living in their proper element. Zealots, as well as other adventurers, must take their chance in this world, whatever security they have made for the other.' In an anonymous pamphlet, supposed to have been written by the Bishop of London, the same complaint is made against the Methodists, that they would adhere to the Church, for 'every prudent society must desire that they would withdraw

[1] See the Archbishop of Canterbury's Second Charge, 1762 (Secker's *Charges*); and the First Charge of the Bishop of St. Davids, 1790 (Horsley's *Charges*). The same cause prejudiced Waterland against the 'new enthusiasts,' as he called the Methodists.—See, *inter alia*, his sermon on the 'Trial of Spirits,' vol. v. p. 698 of his *Works*, Van Mildert's edition, also his treatises on 'Regeneration' and 'Justification.' But Waterland did not live long enough to see the results of Methodism. One is thankful to find Secker, although he objected to Methodism on the ground mentioned above, protesting against Foote's caricature of Whitefield in the 'Minor' at Drury Lane. 'Did I tell you,' wrote Horace Walpole to Montagu, 'that the Archbishop tried to hinder the "Minor" from being played at Drury Lane? For once the Duke of Devonshire was firm, and would only let him correct some passages, and even of these the Duke has restored some. Foote says he will take out a licence to preach Tam Cant against Tom Cant.' Secker would not correct the 'Minor,' as suggested by the Duke, because he said he had no wish to see an edition announced by the author as corrected and prepared for the press by the Archbishop of Canterbury.

from her bosom who by sheltering themselves in it can wound and sting her more effectually.' [1]

7. The 'irregularities' of the early Methodists must be taken into full account in any attempt to explain the causes of the bitterness felt against them. The outcry raised on this score had certainly more to say for itself than many of the charges which were brought against them. The ordained ministers among them, at any rate, had promised at their ordination to obey those who were set over them, and this they certainly did not do. Perhaps Wesley's defence of himself on this count of the indictment brought against him is the weakest part of his, in most respects, unanswerable 'Appeal.' He has recourse to the *Tu quoque* argument—always a weak one—and excuses his own disobedience partly on the grounds that the canons were literally obeyed by none, and partly by laying stress on the epithet '*godly* admonitions.' 'Would to God,' he exclaims, 'every minister and member of the Church were herein altogether as I am!' [2] But, after all, the fault—or let us say, mistake—lay to a great extent with the governors of the Church, who could not discern the signs of the times, and utilise, instead of repulsing, these effective workers. Most powerful are Wesley's remarks on this point. He asserts, and with perfect truth, that a great part of those who went to hear the Methodists went before to no church at all. 'They no more pretended to belong to the Church of England than to the Church of Muscovy.' 'Those,' he adds, 'who did go to church before go three times as often now; those who never went to church at all before do go now at all opportunities.' 'Behold, the day of the Lord *is* come. He is again visiting and redeeming His people. Having eyes, see ye not? Having ears, do ye not hear, neither understand with your hearts? At this hour the Lord is rolling away our reproach,' &c. [3] One of the best things Whitefield ever wrote was his stirring appeal to the Bishop of Bangor on the crisis through which the Church was passing.

[1] *Orthodoxy against Methodists.* See also a pamphlet entitled [*Observations on the Conduct and Behaviour of a Certain Sect, usually distinguished by the Name of Methodists*, written probably by Bishop Gibson. See Julia Wedgwood's *John Wesley*, &c., pp. 302, 303.

[2] *Appeal*, pp. 32, 34, 116.

[3] See *Appeal, passim*, especially pp. 31, 40, 196, 228.

8. It is hardly necessary to notice a charge which Wesley in his 'Appeal' indignantly denies and unanswerably disproves —viz. that the Methodists worked for gain; that they were merely vulgar, designing hypocrites, who were amassing immense fortunes by imposing upon the credulity of their followers. But the old proverb that if you throw plenty of mud some of it will stick, is applicable to the case in point. Such charges, utterly untrue and unreasonable as they were, were not without their effect in swelling the wave of unpopularity which burst upon the early Methodists.[1]

(2) THE CALVINISTIC CONTROVERSY.

After all, however, there was a more formidable enemy to the progress of the Evangelical revival than any from without. The good men who made so bold and effectual a stand against vice and irreligion in the last century might have been still more successful had they presented a united front to the common foe; but, unfortunately, a spirit of discord within

[1] To these causes yet another may, perhaps, be added—viz. a fear lest the doctrines of Whitefield might be injurious to morality. Joseph Clarke, in his Preface to Waterland's *Sermons on several Important Subjects of Religion and Morality*, writes: 'There hath of late years sprung up among us a sect of men who are reviving the Solifidian doctrine, contending that we are *so* justified by *faith alone* as to *exclude good works* from being *necessary conditions* of *justification*, admitting them to be only necessary *fruits* and *consequences* of it. Bishop Bull's works, being wrote in Latin, and so of no service to unlearned readers, from whom this sect of men gather their converts, there seemed to be wanting some treatise in English on this subject, which might set that important point of doctrine in a clear light to common Christians.' This seems to have been the occasion of Dr. Waterland's writing his 'Summary View of the Doctrine of Justification (Waterland's *Works*, Van Mildert's edition, vol. v. p. 388; see also p. 391 of the same vol.) But 'common Christians' are not governed by logic. While Dr. Waterland was demonstrating his position with faultless logic, and producing no effect on 'common Christians' whatever, Whitefield was preaching with no logic at all, and producing the happiest effects on the morality of these 'common Christians.' Waterland, however, died in 1740, and therefore did not see the effects of the Methodist preaching. Bishop Horsley, however, in 1790 insinuates the same charge when he speaks of 'opinions which seem to emancipate the believer from the emancipation of all moral law (Fifteenth Charge of Bishop of St. Davids); so does Bishop Tomline in his *Refutation of Calvinism* (see pp. 94, 165, 171, 176, &c.). Both these writers ought to have known that the Calvinism of the Methodists did not, as a rule encourage immorality.

their ranks wasted their strength and diverted them from work for which they were admirably adapted to work for which they were by no means fitted. Hitherto our attention has been mainly directed to the strength of the movement. The pure lives and disinterested motives of the founders of Methodism, their ceaseless energy, their fervent piety—in a word, their love of God and their love of their neighbour for God's sake—these are the points on which one loves to dwell; these are traits in their characters which posterity has gratefully recognised, though scant justice was done them by the men of their own generation. In their quarrel with sin and Satan all good men will sympathise with them. It is painful to turn from this to their quarrels among themselves; but these latter occupy too large a space in their history to be lightly passed over.

It has frequently been remarked in these pages that the eighteenth century, or at least the first half of it, was essentially an age of controversy; but of all the controversies which distracted the Church and nation that one which now comes under our consideration was the most unprofitable and unsatisfactory in every way. The subject of it was that old, old difficulty which has agitated men's minds from the beginning, and will probably remain unsettled until the end of time—a difficulty which is not confined to Christianity, nor even to Deism, but which meets us quite apart from theology altogether. It is that which, in theological language, is involved in the contest between Calvinism and Arminianism; in philosophical, between free-will and necessity. 'The reconciling,' wrote Lord Lyttelton, 'the prescience of God with the free-will of man, Mr. Locke, after much thought on the subject, freely confessed that he could not do, though he acknowledged both. And what Mr. Locke could not do, in reasoning upon subjects of a metaphysical nature, I am apt to think few men, if any, can hope to perform.'[1] It would have been well if the Methodists had acted according to the spirit of these wise words; but, unfortunately, they considered it necessary not only to discuss the question, but to insist upon their own solution of it in the most positive and dogmatic terms.

[1] Lord Lyttelton's *Letter to Mr. West*, quoted in *A Refutation of Calvinism*, by G. Tomline, Bishop of Winchester, p. 253.

One would have thought that John Wesley, at any rate, considering his expertness in logic, would have been aware of the utter hopelessness of disputing upon such a point; but the key to that great man's conduct in this, as in other matters, is to be found in the intensely practical character of his mind, especially in matters of religion. He felt the practical danger of Antinomianism, and, feeling this, he did not, perhaps, quite do justice to all that might be said on the other side. In point of fact, however, he shrank, especially in his later years, from the controversy more than others did, who were far less competent to manage it.

The dispute did not wholly turn upon the question of predestination, but included the five points of the Quinquarticular controversy and other collateral issues. Are a certain number predestined to eternal life? Are others destined to eternal condemnation? (Perhaps a logical result of the former question being answered in the affirmative, but not admitted—at any rate, not dwelt upon—by many of the Calvinists.) Have all a day of grace? Is justification a result of sanctification, or does it precede it, or are the two identical? Is Christ's righteousness imputed or imparted to the believer, or both? Is it possible to attain to a state of sinless perfection on earth? Is God's grace indefectible, so that one who is once a believer must always be a believer, and, no matter what sins of infirmity he may fall into, his final perseverance certain? Are there two justifications, the one by faith at the time of conversion, the second by works—that is, by the evidence, not the merit, of works—at the Day of Judgment? Are we to work *for* life or *from* life? Has the expression 'a finished salvation' any other meaning than that of 'a finished redemption'? Is the liberty of the will consistent with the operations of Divine grace? Did Christ die for the whole world, or practically only for the elect?

These are some, and only some, of the profound questions which were agitated in this unhappy Calvinistic controversy; for, look at it from what point of view one will, it was a most unhappy one. It is an unhappy thing to see men leaving work which they did admirably well for work which they did very badly. It is an unhappy thing to see good men railing at one another and forgetting the plainest rules

of Christian charity and Christian courtesy. All these things one may see in the Calvinistic controversy. The questions at issue are those which require the profoundest theological and philosophical training; and those who discussed them were certainly neither profound theologians nor philosophers.[1]

In other controversies which agitated the eighteenth century there is some compensation for the unkindly feelings and unchristian and extravagant language generated by the heat of dispute in the thought that if they did not solve, they at any rate contributed something to the solution of, pressing questions which clamoured for an answer. The circumstances of the times required that the subjects should be ventilated. Thus, for example, the relations between Church and State were ill understood, and *some* light, at any rate, was thrown upon them by the tedious Bangorian controversy. The method in which God reveals His will to man was a subject which circumstances rendered it necessary to discuss. This subject was fairly sifted in the Deistical controversy. The pains which were bestowed upon the Trinitarian controversy were not thrown away. But it is difficult to see what fresh light was thrown upon *any* subject by the Calvinistic controversy. It left the question exactly in the same position as it was in before. In studying the other controversies, if the reader derives but little instruction or edification on the main topic, he can hardly fail to gain some valuable information on collateral subjects. But he may wade through the whole of the Calvinistic controversy without gaining any valuable information on any subject whatever. This is partly owing to the nature of the topic discussed, but partly also to the difference between the mental calibre of the disputants in this and the other controversies. We have at least to thank the Deists and the Anti-Trinitarians for giving occasion for the publication of some literary masterpieces. Through their means English theology was enriched by the writings of Butler, Conybeare, Warburton, Waterland, Sherlock, and Horsley. But the Calvinistic controversy,

[1] For a somewhat ruthless exposure of the intellectual weakness of Methodism generally, and of the Calvinistic and anti-Calvinistic literature in particular, see I. Taylor's *Wesley and Methodism*, pp. 16, 110–118, 125.

from the beginning to the end, contributed not one single work of permanent value to theology.

This is a sweeping statement, and requires to be justified. Let us, then, pass on at once from general statements to details.

The controversy seems to have broken out during Whitefield's absence in America (1739–1740). A correspondence arose between Wesley and Whitefield on the subject of Calvinism and collateral questions, in which the two good men seem to be constantly making laudable determinations not to dispute—and as constantly breaking them. Thus we find Whitefield writing to Wesley in March 1740: 'The doctrine of election and final perseverance of those who are in Christ I am ten thousand times more convinced of, if possible, than when I saw you last. You think otherwise. Why, then, should we dispute, when there is no probability of convincing? Will it not in the end destroy brotherly love, and insensibly take from us that cordial union and sweetness of soul which I pray may always subsist between us? . . . Honoured sir, let us offer salvation freely to all by the blood of Jesus, and whatever light God has communicated to us let us freely communicate to others. Provoke me to it as much as you please, I will not enter the lists.' As Wesley also made a similar resolution, one might have hoped that all disputing would have been avoided. But, alas! it was not so. Two months after Whitefield had made the wise determination recorded above we find him writing to Wesley again. 'Honoured sir, I cannot entertain prejudices against your principles and conduct any longer without informing you. The more I examine the writings of the most experienced Christians, the more I differ from your notion about not committing sin and your denying the doctrines of election and final perseverance.'[1] After much more to the same effect which is not worth quoting, he concludes with an artless simplicity, which might have convinced anyone how utterly useless it was to contend with him: 'God Himself, I find, teaches my friends the doctrine of election. Sister H. hath lately been convinced, and, if I mistake not, dear and honoured

[1] See Whitefield's *Letters* (*ut supra*), *passim*; also Gledstone's *Life of Whitefield*, pp. 200, 218, 219, 224, 227, 232, 242.

Mr. Wesley will be.' To this Wesley replied, with his usual good sense: 'The case is quite plain. There are bigots both for predestination and against it. God is sending a message to those on either side; but neither will receive it unless from one who is of their own opinion. Therefore, for a time, you are suffered to be of one opinion and I of another. But, when His time is come, God will do what man cannot—viz. make us both of one mind.' Whitefield, however, could not forbear recurring to the forbidden subject. 'I write not,' he says, 'to enter into disputation. I cannot bear the thoughts of opposing; but how can I avoid it if you go about, as your brother Charles once said, to drive John Calvin out of Bristol? Alas! I never read anything that John Calvin wrote; my doctrines I had from Christ and His Apostles. . . . I find there is disputing among you about election and perfection. I pray God to put a stop to it; for what good end will it answer? I wish I knew your principles fully. Did you write oftener and more frankly, it might have a better effect than silence and reserve.' Wesley seems to have recommenced the argument, for we find Whitefield writing a little later: 'Dear brother Wesley, what mean you by disputing in all your letters? May God give you to know yourself, and then you will not plead for absolute perfection or call the doctrine of election a doctrine of devils,' &c.; and again about the same time: 'Why did you throw out that bone of contention? Why did you print that sermon against predestination? Why did you, in particular, my dear brother Charles, affix your hymn and join in putting out your late hymn-book? Why did your brother send his sermon against election over to America?' To these questions Wesley made the obvious reply: 'If you had disliked my sermon you might have printed another on the same text, and answered my proofs without mentioning my name.' It is needless to quote more of this unprofitable correspondence, the gist of which has been wittily summed up thus: 'Dear George, I have read what you have written on the subject of predestination, and God has taught me to see that you are wrong and that I am right. Yours affectionately, J. Wesley.' And the reply: 'Dear John, I have read what you have written on the subject of predestination, and God has taught me that I

am right and you are wrong. Yours affectionately, G. Whitefield.'[1]

If the dispute between these good men was warm while the Atlantic separated them, it was still warmer when they met. In 1741 Whitefield returned to England, and a temporary alienation between him and Wesley arose. Whitefield is said to have told his friend that they preached two different Gospels, and to have avowed his intention to preach against him whenever he preached at all.[2] Then they turned the one to the right hand and the other to the left. As in most disputes, there were, no doubt, faults on both sides. Both were tempted to speak unadvisedly with their lips, and, what was still worse, to write unadvisedly with their pens. It has already been seen that John Wesley had the knack of both saying and writing very cutting things. If Whitefield was rash and lost his temper, Wesley was certainly irritating. Whitefield, for instance, had made an unfortunate slip in saying that Wesley's views of redemption were Socinian. Of course Wesley could reply at once that the Socinians did not hold the doctrine of redemption at all—'Tota redemptio metaphora'—but he need not have added these contemptuous remarks, which would be more galling than positive abuse: 'How easy were it for me to hit many other palpable blots in that which you call an answer to my sermon! And how, above measure, contemptible would you then appear to all impartial men either of sense or learning! But I spare you; mine hands shall not be upon you; my general tenor is, Spare the young man, even Absalom, for my sake.' Wesley always kept perfectly cool in controversy; but, though cool and calm, he was not a cold man. It is not doing justice to him to say, as it has been said, that 'Whitefield felt the chilling influence of Wesley's imperiousness,' and that 'there was a measure of coldness about Wesley which repelled him.'[3] It would probably be nearer the truth to say that Whitefield felt himself over-matched; his opponent was too strong for

[1] See the *Christian Observer* for October 1857, p. 696, 'Review of *The Coronet and the Cross*,' by Rev. A. H. Mew.

[2] See J. Wedgwood's *John Wesley*, &c., p. 238, &c.; *Life of Lady Huntingdon*, &c., p. 198, &c.; Philip's *Life of Whitefield*, p. 209, &c.

[3] *Life of Lady Huntingdon*, i. 198.

him in point of ability and learning, no less than in self-control; and this very feeling furnishes a strong excuse for the unseemly language and conduct of Whitefield. There is no doubt that he felt very strongly both the truth and the importance of his own doctrine, and the uncomfortable conviction that he was not strong enough to enforce it against his powerful antagonist may at least furnish a reason for his behaviour which is consistent with his truly Christian character. He was rash, and listened too much to tale-bearers and put too unfavourable a construction upon Wesley's words; but he had some provocation. On the other hand, it is unjust to Wesley to say that 'he seems to have parted with his old companion with great coldness.' We have his own words, which bear on the face of them the evidence of their sincerity, to prove that he felt most bitterly his alienation from Whitefield. 'After many stabs in the dark,' he writes, 'I was publicly attacked, not by an open enemy, but by my own familiar friend [Whitefield]. But I could not censure him. I could only cover my face and say, *καὶ σὺ εἰς ἐκείνων*; *καὶ σύ, τέκνον*;'[1] there is no need to enter further into the details of the dispute. How Wesley, instead of acting on his own good judgment, which rarely failed him, foolishly drew lots to decide whether he should preach and print the sermon on predestination which gave Whitefield so much offence; how Whitefield, with equal folly, was reminded by the 'lot sermon' to tell the tale of the 'lot letter' of 1738; how Wesley tore up Whitefield's letter before his congregation, saying, 'I will do what I believe Mr. Whitefield would if he were here himself;' how the immediate results of the separation were for a time disastrous to Whitefield's work, so that, 'instead of having thousands to attend him, scarce one of his spiritual children came to see him from morning to night,' and 'members who a year before would have plucked out their eyes for him ran by him whilst he was preaching, disdaining to look at him, and some of them putting their fingers in their ears, that they might not hear one word he said'—all this and other details of the unfortunate quarrel may be found in any history of Wesley or Whitefield.

It is a far pleasanter task to record that in course of time

[1] Tyerman's *Life of Wesley*, i. 400.

the breach was entirely healed, though neither disputant receded one jot from his opinions. No man was ever more ready to confess his faults, no man ever had a larger heart or was actuated by a truer spirit of Christian charity, than George Whitefield. Never was there a man of a more forgiving temper than John Wesley. 'Ten thousand times would I rather have died than part with my old friends,' said Whitefield of the Wesleys. 'Bigotry flies before him and cannot stand,' said John Wesley of Whitefield. It was impossible that an alienation between two such men, both of whom were only anxious to do one great work, should be permanent.

From 1749 the Calvinistic controversy lay comparatively at rest for some years. The publication of Hervey's 'Dialogues between Theron and Aspasio' in 1755, with John Wesley's remarks upon them, and Hervey's reply to the remarks, reawakened a temporary interest in the question, but it was not till the year 1771 that the tempest broke out again with more than its former force.

The occasion of the outburst was the publication of Wesley's 'Minutes of the Conference of 1770.' Possibly John Wesley may have abstained for some years, out of regard for Whitefield, from discussing in Conference a subject which was calculated to disturb the re-established harmony between him and his friend.'[1] At any rate, the offending Minutes, oddly enough, begin by referring to what had passed at the first Conference, twenty-six years before. 'We said in 1744, We have leaned too much towards Calvinism.' After a long abeyance the subject is taken up at the point at which it stood more than a quarter of a century before; the reader must be left to judge whether the reason suggested above is a probable one or not.

The Minutes have often been quoted; but, for clearness' sake, it may be well to quote them once more.

'We said in 1744, We have leaned too much towards Calvinism. Wherein—

'1. With regard to man's faithfulness, our Lord Himself taught us to use the expression; and we ought never

[1] Not, of course, that he waited until the death of Whitefield before reopening the question; for Conference met in August, and Whitefield did not die until September, 1770.

to be ashamed of it. We ought steadily to assert, on His authority, that if a man is not "faithful in the unrighteous mammon" God will not "give him the true riches."

'2. With regard to working for life, this also our Lord has expressly commanded us. "Labour" (Ἐργάζεσθε—literally, "work") "for the meat that endureth to everlasting life." And, in fact, every believer, till he comes to glory, works for, as well as from, life.

'3. We have received it as a maxim that "a man can do nothing in order to justification." Nothing can be more false: Whoever desires to find favour with God should "cease to do evil and learn to do well." Whoever repents should do "works meet for repentance." And if this is not in order to find favour, what does he do them for?

'Review the whole affair.

'1. Who of us is now accepted of God?

'He that now believes in Christ, with a loving, obedient heart.

'2. But who among those that never heard of Christ?

'He that feareth God and worketh righteousness, according to the light he has.

'3. Is this the same with "he that is sincere"?

'Nearly, if not quite.

'4. Is not this salvation by works?

'Not by the merit of works, but by works as a condition.

'5. What have we, then, been disputing about for these thirty years?

'I am afraid about words.

'6. As to merit itself, of which we have been so dreadfully afraid, we are rewarded according to our works—yea, because of our works.

'How does this differ from "for the sake of our works"? And how differs this from *secundum merita operum*, "as our works deserve"? Can you split this hair? I doubt I cannot.

'7. The grand objection to one of the preceding propositions is drawn from matter of fact. God does in fact justify those who, by their own confession, "neither feared God nor wrought righteousness." Is this an exception to the general rule?

'It is a doubt if God makes any exception at all. But how are we sure that the person in question never did fear God and work righteousness? His own saying so is not proof; for we know how all that are convinced of sin undervalue themselves in every respect.

'8. Does not talking of a justified or a sanctified state tend to mislead men, almost naturally leading them to trust in what was done in one moment? Whereas we are every hour and every moment pleasing or displeasing to God, according to our works, according to the whole of our inward tempers and our outward behaviour.'[1]

So great was the alarm and indignation caused by these Minutes that a 'circular printed letter' was, at the instigation of Lady Huntingdon, sent round among the friends of the Evangelical movement, the purport of which was as follows:— 'Sir, whereas Mr. Wesley's Conference is to be held at Bristol on Tuesday, August 6, next, it is proposed by Lady Huntingdon and many other Christian friends (real Protestants) to have a meeting at Bristol at the same time, of such principal persons, both clergy and laity, who disapprove of the under-written Minutes; and, as the same are thought injurious to the very fundamental principles of Christianity, it is further proposed that they go in a body to the said Conference, and insist upon a formal recantation of the said Minutes, and, in case of a refusal, that they sign and publish their protest against them. Your presence, sir, on this occasion is particularly requested; but, if it should not suit your convenience to be there, it is desired that you will transmit your sentiments on the subject to such persons as you think proper to produce them. It is submitted to you whether it would not be right, in the opposition to be made to such a dreadful heresy, to recommend it to as many of your Christian friends, as well of the Dissenters as of the Established Church, as you can prevail on to be there, the cause being of so public a nature. I am, &c., Walter Shirley.'

The first thing that naturally strikes one is, What business had Lady Huntingdon and her friends to interfere with Mr.

[1] Extracts from the Minutes of some Late Conversations between the Rev. Mr. Wesley and others at a Public Conference, held in London, August 7, 1870, and printed by W. Pim, Bristol. 'Take heed to your doctrine.'

Wesley and his Conference at all? But this obvious objection does not appear to have been raised. It would seem that there was a sort of vague understanding that the friends of the Evangelical movement, whether Calvinist or Arminian, were in some sense answerable to one another for their proceedings. The Calvinists evidently thought it not only permissible but their bounden duty not merely to disavow but to condemn, and, if possible, bring about the suppression of the obnoxious Minutes. Mr. Shirley said publicly 'he termed peace in such a case a shameful indolence, and silence no less than treachery.'[1] John Wesley did not refuse to justify to the Calvinists what he had asserted. He wrote to Lady Huntingdon in June 1771 (the Conference did not meet till August), referring her to his 'Sermons on Salvation by Faith,' published in 1738, and requesting that the 'Minutes of Conference might be interpreted by the sermons referred to.' Lady Huntingdon felt her duty to be clear. She wrote to Charles Wesley, declaring that the proper explanation of the Minutes was 'Popery unmasked.' 'Thinking,' she added, 'that those ought to be deemed Papists who did not disavow them, I readily complied with a proposal of an open disavowal of them.'[2]

All this augured ill for the harmony of the impending Conference; but it passed off far better than could possibly have been expected. Very few of the Calvinists who were invited to attend responded to the appeal. Christian feeling got the better of controversial bitterness on both sides. John Wesley, with a noble candour, drew up a declaration, which was signed by himself and fifty-three of his preachers, stating that, 'as the Minutes have been understood to favour justification by works, we, the Rev. John Wesley and others, declare we had no such meaning, and that we abhor the doctrine of justification by works as a most perilous and abominable doctrine. As the Minutes are not sufficiently guarded in the way they are expressed, we declare we have no trust but in the merits of Christ for justification or salvation. And though no one is a real Christian believer (and therefore cannot be saved) who doth not good works when there is time and opportunity, yet our works have no part in meriting or

[1] *Life of Lady Huntingdon*, ii. 236. [2] Id. 240.

purchasing our justification from first to last, in whole or in part.'[1] Lady Huntingdon and her relative Mr. Shirley were not wanting, on their part, in Christian courtesy. 'As Christians,' wrote Lady Huntingdon, 'we wish to retract what a more deliberate consideration might have prevented, as we would as little wish to defend even truth itself presumptuously as we would submit servilely to deny it.' Mr. Shirley wrote to the same effect.

But, alas! the troubles were by no means at an end. Fletcher had written a vindication of the Minutes, which Wesley published. Wesley has been severely blamed for his inconsistency in acting thus, 'after having publicly drawn up and signed a recantation [explanation?] of the obnoxious principles contained in the Minutes.'[2] This censure might seem to be justified by a letter which Fletcher wrote to Lady Huntingdon. 'When,' he says, 'I took up my pen in vindication of Mr. Wesley's sentiments, it never entered my heart that my doing so would have separated me from those I love and esteem. Would to God I had never done it! To your ladyship it has caused incalculable pain and unhappiness, and my conscience hath often stung me with bitter and heart-cutting reproaches.'[3] But, on the other hand, Fletcher himself, in a preface to his 'Second Check to Antinomianism,' entirely exonerated Wesley from all blame in the matter, and practically proved his approbation of his friend's conduct by continuing the controversy in his behalf.

The dogs of war were now let slip. In 1772 Sir Richard Hill and his brother Rowland measured swords with Fletcher, and drew forth from him his Third and Fourth Checks. In 1773 Sir R. Hill gave what he termed his 'Finishing Stroke;' Berridge, the eccentric Vicar of Everton, rushed into the fray with his 'Christian World Unmasked;' and Toplady, the ablest of all who wrote on the Calvinist side, published a pamphlet under the suggestive title of 'More Work for John Wesley.' The next year (1774) there was a sort of armistice between the combatants, their attention being diverted from

[1] *Life of Lady Huntingdon*, ii. 240, 241. [2] Id. 243, &c.

[3] Id. 245. 'Berridge said the contest at Bristol turned upon this hinge, whether it should be Pope John or Pope Joan.

theological to political subjects, owing to the troubles in America. But in 1775 Toplady again took the field, publishing his 'Historic Proof of the Calvinism of the Church of England.' Mr. Sellon, a clergyman, and Mr. Olivers, the manager of Wesley's printing, appeared on the Arminian side. The very titles of some of the works published sufficiently indicate their character. 'Farrago Double Distilled,' 'An Old Fox Tarred and Feathered,' 'Pope John,' tell their own tale.

In fact, the kindest thing that could be done to the authors of this bitter writing (who were really good men) would be to let it all be buried in oblivion. Some of them lived to be ashamed of what they had written. Rowland Hill, though he still retained his views as to the doctrines he opposed, lamented in his maturer age that the controversy had not been carried on in a different spirit.[1] Toplady, after he had seen Olivers, wrote: 'To say the truth, I am glad I saw Mr. Olivers, for he appears to be a person of stronger sense and better behaviour than I had imagined.'[2] Fletcher (who had really the least cause of any to regret what he had written), before leaving England for a visit to his native country, invited all with whom he had been engaged in controversy to see him, that, 'all doctrinal differences apart, he might testify his sincere regret for having given them the least displeasure,' &c.[3]

It will be remembered that the Deistical controversy was conducted with considerable acrimony on both sides; but the Deistical and anti-Deistical literature is amenity itself when compared with the bitterness and scurrility with which the Calvinistic controversy was carried on. At the same time it would be a grievous error to conclude that because the good men who took part in it forgot the rules of Christian charity they were not under the power of Christian influences. The very reverse was the case. It was the very earnestness of their Christian convictions, and the intensity of their belief in the directing agency of the Holy Spirit over Christian

[1] And of his own writings he said: 'A softer style and spirit would have better become me.'—See *Life of Rev. R. Hill*, by Rev. G. Sidney, pp. 121, 122.

[2] Id. p. 122.

[3] Southey's *Life of Wesley*, ii. 180.

minds, which made them write with a warmth which human infirmity turned into acrimony. They all felt *de vitâ et sanguine agitur*; they all believed that they were directed by the Spirit of God: consequently their opponents were opponents not of them, the human instruments, but of that God who was working by their means; in plain words, they were doing the work of the Devil. Add to this a somewhat strait and one-sided course of reading, and a very imperfect appreciation of the real difficulties of the subject they were handling (for all, without exception, write with the utmost confidence, as if they understood the whole matter thoroughly, and nothing could possibly be written to any purpose on the other side), and the paradox of truly Christian men using such truly unchristian weapons will cease to puzzle us.

Two only of the writers in this badly managed controversy deserve any special notice—viz. Fletcher on the Arminian and Toplady on the Calvinist side.

Fletcher's 'Checks to Antinomianism' are still remembered by name (which is more than can be said of most of the literature connected with this controversy), and may, perhaps, still be read, and even regarded as an authority by a few; but they are little known to the general reader, and occupy no place whatever in theological literature. Perhaps they hardly deserve to do so. Nevertheless, anything which such a man as Fletcher wrote is worthy at least of respectful consideration, if for nothing else, at any rate for the saintly character of the writer. But, apart from this, the 'Checks' are in themselves well worth reading. Fletcher was very far indeed from being, what Wesley called him, 'the finest writer of the age.' Wesley need not have gone far from home to find his superior; for he was a much better writer himself. Still, Fletcher wrote like a scholar and a gentleman, and, what is better than either, like a Christian. Those who accuse him of having written bitterly against the Calvinists cannot, one would imagine, have read his writings, but must have taken at second hand the cruelly unjust representation of them given by his opponents.[1] 'If ever,' wrote Southey, with perfect truth, 'true Christian charity was manifested in polemical writing, it was by Fletcher of Madeley.' There is

[1] See the abuse quoted in the *Fourth Check*, pp. 11, 42, 121.

but one passage [1] in which Fletcher condescends to anything like personal scurrility, in spite of the many grossly personal insults which were heaped upon him and his friends.

This self-restraint is all the more laudable because Fletcher possessed a rich vein of satirical humour, which he might have employed with telling effect against his opponents. A good specimen of this humour may be found in the passage where Fletcher comments upon the expression in the Minutes, 'I am afraid we have disputed about words:' 'A physician tells me that the way, the only way or method, in which we live, is abstaining from poison and taking proper food. "No," says another; "you should say that abstaining from poison and taking proper food are the means by which our life is preserved." "You are quite mistaken," says a third; "rejecting poison and eating are the terms which God hath fixed upon for our preservation." "No," says a fourth; "they are duties without the performance, or blessings without the receiving, of which we must absolutely die." "You are all in the wrong; you know nothing at all of the matter," says another, who applauds himself for his wonderful discovery: "turning from poison and receiving nourishment are the exercises of a living man; therefore they must absolutely be called parts of his life, or privileges annexed to it. You quite take away people's appetite and clog their stomach by calling them 'duties, terms, conditions.' Only call them 'privileges,' and you will see nobody will touch poison and all will eat most heartily." While they are all neglecting their food and taking the poison of this contention he that had mentioned the word "condition" starts up and says, "Review the whole affair; take heed to your assertions: I am afraid we dispute about words." Upon this all rise against him,' &c. Another good specimen of his satire is his *reductio ad absurdum* of the pressing of the metaphorical language of Scripture too far. 'Pardon me, honoured sir, if, to make my mistaken brethren ashamed of their argument, I dedicate to them the following soliloquy, wherein I reason upon their own plan:—Those very Jews whom the Baptist and our Lord called "a brood of vipers" and "serpents" were soon after compared to "chickens" which Christ

[1] See *Fourth Check*, p. 155.

wanted "to gather as a hen does her brood." What a wonderful change was here! The vipers became chickens. Now, as it was never heard that chickens became vipers, I conclude that those Jews, even when they came about our Lord "like fat bulls of Bashan," like "ramping and roaring lions," were true chickens still. And, indeed, why should they not have been as true chickens as David was a true sheep when he murdered Uriah? I abhor the doctrine which maintains that a man may be a chick or a sheep to-day and a viper or a goat to-morrow. But I am a little embarrassed. If none go to hell but "goats," and none to heaven but "sheep," where shall the "chickens" go? where the "wolves in sheep's clothing"? And in what limbus of heaven or hell shall we put "that fox Herod," the "dogs" who "return to their vomit," and the "swine" before whom we must not "cast our pearls"? Are they all species of goats or some particular kind of sheep?' Or, once more, take his exposure of the absurdity of making too much of the Biblical description of good works as 'dung,' 'dross,' and 'filthy rags.' 'Permit me to produce some of the Scriptures where good works are mentioned, and to substitute for them that phrase which, you tell us, the Scripture authorises you to call them. "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works"—that is, your dung—"and glorify your Father who is in heaven." "She has wrought a good work"—that is, a filthy rag—"upon me against my burial." "Dorcas was full of good works"—that is, of dung and rags. "God made you to abound in every good work"—that is, in every sort of dung and dross,' &c. &c.[1] These passages are surely worthy of Dean Swift himself.

Fletcher could also write at times in beautiful language, and use most happy illustrations. As, for instance: 'Remember thou hast nothing to boast of, but much reason to be humbled. If thy works are compared to a rose, the colour, odour, and sweetness are Christ's; the aptness to fade and the thorns are thine. If to a burning taper, the snuff and smoke come from thee, the bright and cheering light from thy Bridegroom. The excellence and merit of the performance flow from Him,

[1] See *Checks*, pp. 61, 66, 67, 83, 101, 227, two volumes in one, published at the Wesleyan Conference Office, 1872.

the flaws and imperfections from thee; nevertheless the whole work is as truly thine as grapes are truly the fruit of the branch that bore them.' Again: 'The King promises rewards for good pictures to miserable foundlings, whom he has charitably brought up and graciously admitted into his royal academy of painting. Far from being masters of their art, they can of themselves do nothing but spoil canvas and waste colours by making monstrous figures; but the King's son, a perfect painter, by his father's leave guides their hands, and by that means good pictures are produced, though not so excellent as they would have been had he not made them by their stiff and clumsy hands. The King, however, approves of them and fixes the reward of each picture according to its peculiar merit. If thou sayest that the poor foundlings, owing all to his Majesty, and the Prince having freely guided their hands, they themselves merit nothing, because, after all they have done, they are miserable daubers still, and nothing is properly theirs but the imperfections of the pictures, and therefore the King's reward, though it may be of promise, can never be of debt, I grant it, I assert it; but if thou sayest the good pictures have no merit, I beg leave to dissent from thee and to tell thee thou speakest as unadvisedly for the King as Job's friends did for God. For if the pictures have absolutely no merit, dost not thou greatly reflect upon the King's taste and wisdom in saying that he rewards them? In the name of common sense, what is it that he rewards, the merit or demerit of the work?'

Perhaps the most touching passages in the 'Checks' are those in which the writer makes a personal protest against the unkindness with which Wesley had been treated. 'A grey-headed minister of Christ, an old general in the armies of Emmanuel, a father who has children capable of instructing even masters in Israel, one whom God made the first and principal instrument of the late revival of true religion in Israel, should have met with more consideration.' The passages are too long to be quoted in full; but one paragraph of extreme beauty, in which the writer incidentally pays a generous tribute to the Calvinist Whitefield, may be cited. 'Of the two greatest and most useful ministers I ever knew, one is no more. The other, after amazing labours, flies still

with unwearied diligence through the three kingdoms, calling sinners to repentance and to the healing fountain of Jesus' blood. Though oppressed with the weight of near seventy years and the care of near thirty thousand souls, he shames still, by his unabated zeal and immense labours, all the young ministers in England, perhaps in Christendom. He has generally blown the Gospel trump and rode sixteen or twenty miles before most of the professors, who despise his labours, have left their downy pillow. As he begins the day, the week, the year, so he concludes them, still intent upon extensive services for the glory of the Redeemer and the good of souls. And shall we lightly lift up our pens, our tongues, our hands, against him? No; let them rather forget their cunning. If we will quarrel, can we find nobody to fall out with but the minister upon whom God puts the greatest honour? Our Elijah has lately been translated to heaven. Grey-headed Elisha is yet awhile continued upon earth. And shall we make a hurry and noise to bring in railing accusations against him with more success?' &c.

Fletcher showed an excellent knowledge of Scripture and great ingenuity in explaining it on his own side. He was an adroit and skilful disputant, and, considering that he was a foreigner, had a great mastery over the English language.

What, in spite of these merits, makes the 'Checks' an unsatisfactory book, is the want of a comprehensive grasp of general principles. In common with all the writers on both sides of the question, Fletcher shows a strange lack of philosophical modesty—a lack which is all the stranger in him because personally he was conspicuous for extreme modesty and thoroughly genuine humility. But there is no appearance, either in Fletcher's writings or in those of any others who engaged in the controversy, that they adequately realised the extreme difficulty of the subject. Everything is stated with the utmost confidence, as if the whole difficulty—which an archangel might have felt—was entirely cleared away. If one compares Fletcher's writings on Calvinism with the scattered notices of the subject in Waterland's works, the difference between the two writers is apparent at once; there is a massiveness and a breadth of culture about the older writer which contrasts painfully with the thinness and narrow-

ness of the younger. Or, if it be unfair to compare Fletcher with an intellectual giant like Waterland, we may compare his 'Checks' with Bishop Tomline's 'Refutation of Calvinism.' Bishop Tomline is even more unfair to the Calvinists than Fletcher, but he shows far greater maturity both of style and thought. All the three writers took the same general view of the subject, though from widely different standpoints. But Tomline is as much superior to Fletcher as he is inferior to Waterland.

If Fletcher was pre-eminently the best writer in this controversy on the Arminian side, it is no less obvious that the palm must be awarded to Toplady on the Calvinist side. Before we say anything about Toplady's writings, let it be remembered that his pen does not do justice to his character. Toplady was personally a pious, worthy man, a diligent pastor, beloved by and successful among his parishioners, and by no means quarrelsome—except upon paper. He lived a blameless life, principally in a small country village, and died at the early age of thirty-eight. It is only fair to notice these facts, because his controversial writings might convey a very different impression of the character of the man.

Toplady is described by his biographer as 'the legitimate successor of Hervey.'[1] There are certain points of resemblance between the two men. Both were worthy parish priests, and the spheres of duty of both lay in remote country villages; both died at a comparatively early age; both were Calvinists; and both in the course of controversy came into collision with John Wesley. But here the resemblance ends. To describe Toplady as the legitimate successor of Hervey is to do injustice to both. For, on the one hand, Toplady (though his writings were never so popular) was a far abler and far more deep read man than Hervey. There was also a vein of true poetry in him, which his predecessor did not possess. Hervey could never have written 'Rock of Ages.' On the other hand, the gentle Hervey was quite incapable of writing the violent abuse, the bitter personal scurrilities, which disgraced Toplady's pen.

A sad lack of Christian charity is conspicuous in all

[1] *Works of A. M. Toplady, with Memoir of the Author*, in six volumes, vol. i. p. 100.

writers (except Fletcher) in this ill-conducted controversy, but Toplady outherods Herod. 'Many a sore drubbing,' said Dr. Pringle,[1] 'poor Mr. Wesley and his adherents received from Toplady's able pen.' And certainly, if hard words could break bones, 'poor Mr. Wesley' would not have had a whole bone left in his body. He is 'an inveterate troubler of Israel.' He and Mr. Walter Sellon are 'two Pelagian Methodists,' whose 'fraudulent perversions of truth, facts, and common sense gave occasion' for Toplady's writing; but 'they are not persons of sufficient consequence to merit so large and explicit a refutation.' 'Mr. Wesley and his subalterns are in general so excessively scurrilous and abusive that contending with them resembles fighting with chimney sweepers or bathing in a mud pool.' 'Tenderness has no good effect on them.' 'For my own part,' writes Toplady, 'I shall never attempt to hew such mill-stones with a feather. They must be served as nettles; press them close and they cannot sting. Yet have they my prayers for their present and future salvation.' The last passage, in which piety is mixed up in a most unseemly manner with abusiveness, is very painful to read, but very characteristic. There are many other passages written in the same strain. In his introduction to the pamphlet entitled 'More Work for John Wesley' Toplady writes: 'The MS. of the following sheets has lain by me for some weeks, merely with a view of striking out, from time to time, whatever might savour of undue asperity and intemperate warmth.'[2] What Toplady's ideas of 'undue severity and intemperate warmth' may have been it is difficult to say, and still more difficult to conceive what the pamphlet would have been if it had not been toned down. For even in the expurgated edition we find such language as the following: 'Mr. Wesley is for adding the lion to the fox. He wishes not only to wheedle but to thunder the Church out of her Calvinism; partly, perhaps, in resentment for his having been (very deservedly) thundered out of the Church—a deliverance, by-the-bye, on which I most heartily congratulate our sacred mother.' 'Wesley wants to quit the field—he says, for want of leisure, but in fact for want of success. And

[1] *Works of Toplady*, i. 102.

[2] Id. v. 363, &c.

who must cover his retreat but the heroic T. Oliver, *alias* Olivers? And who is this redoubtable Olivers? Truly neither more nor less than a journeyman shoemaker, now retained by Mr. W. as a lay preacher,'—and much more to the same effect. The fact that Wesley would not engage in the controversy himself, but handed his antagonist over to his subordinates, stung Toplady to the quick. 'You say,' he writes to Mr. Sellon, 'I am to be made the subject of another piece, unless it be done by some other hand which I could wish to see. The plain English of this is, Mr. John Wesley's mastiff (who now only snarls) will actually bark at the mischievous Vicar of Broad Hembury unless Mr. John himself, the mastiff's owner, saves his poor cur the trouble by roaring *in propriâ personâ*.' 'The aggressor,' he writes to Mr. Olivers, 'slinks behind one of his drudges, who says, "Fight me in my master's stead." I answer, "No; *ne sutor ultra crepidam.* What hast thou to do with controversy? Away to thy stall and leave Little John to fight his own battles. My business is not with the man, but with the master. I shall not descend to uncase that hog in armour."' And in another passage: 'Let Mr. W. fight his own battles; but let him not fight by proxy; let his cobblers keep to their stalls, his tinkers mend their brazen vessels, his barbers confine themselves to their blocks and basins, his blacksmiths blow more suitable coals than those of controversy: every man in his own order.' But this Mr. Wesley distinctly declined to do. 'Mr. Toplady,' he said, 'I know well; but I do not fight with chimney sweepers. I leave him to Mr. Sellon.' And the next year: 'I have not leisure to consider the matter at large. I can only make a few strictures and leave the young man to be further corrected by one that is full his match, Mr. T. Olivers.' The strictures here referred to were upon a translation of 'Zanchius on Predestination,' by Toplady; and it was on this occasion that Wesley made his well-known summary of Calvinism: 'The sum of all this is, one in twenty (suppose) of mankind are elected; nineteen in twenty are reprobated. The elect shall be saved, do what they will; the reprobate shall be damned, do what they can. Reader, believe this or be damned. Witness my hand, A. T.'—'a forgery,' replied Toplady, 'which would in almost any similar case transmit

the criminal to Virginia or Maryland, if not to Tyburn.'[1] In spite of his bitter prejudices against John Wesley, Toplady recognised his mental powers. 'I am not,' he writes, 'insensible of your parts, but, alas! what is distinguished ability if not wedded to integrity?'[2] And he was no doubt disappointed that a foeman so worthy of his steel would not measure swords with him. In one respect, however, Mr. Wesley's deputies were quite equal to the occasion. They could call names almost as well as Toplady himself. Toplady is 'a venomous slanderer,' 'a malapert boy, severely scratching and clawing with venomous nails,' 'a wild beast of impatience and lionlike fury,'[3] &c. &c.

But enough, perhaps more than enough, has been quoted of this mere Billingsgate abuse to show that the Calvinistic controversy exceeded all other controversies of the century in bitterness.

One word must be added. Although considered as permanent contributions to theological literature, the writings on either side are worthless, yet the dispute was not without value in its immediate effects. It taught the later Evangelical school to guard more carefully their Calvinistic views against the perversions of Antinomianism. This we shall see when we pass on, as we may now do, to review that system which may be termed 'Evangelicalism' in distinction to the earlier Methodism.

(3) THE EVANGELICALS.

> Largior hic campos æther et lumine vestit
> Purpureo . . . .

It is with a real sense of relief that we pass out of the close air and distracting hubbub of an unprofitable controversy into a fresher and calmer atmosphere.

[1] *Works of Toplady, passim.* [2] Id. v. 343.

[3] Id., *passim.* It is not thought necessary to enter here into the unhappy question of Wesley's reported assertion that 'Toplady died in black despair, uttering the most horrible blasphemies, and that none of his friends were permitted to see him.' Those who wish to investigate the story must be referred to Toplady's *Works* and to Mr. Tyerman's *Life of Wesley.* It is a miserable episode in a miserable dispute.

The Evangelical section of the English Church cannot, without considerable qualification, be regarded as the outcome of the earlier movement we have been hitherto considering. It is true that what we must perforce call by the awkward names of 'Evangelicalism' and 'Methodism' had many points in common—that they were constantly identified by the common enemies of both—that they were both parts of what we have termed in the widest sense of the term 'the Evangelical revival'—that they, in fact, crossed and interlaced one another in so many ways that it is not always easy to disentangle the one from the other—that there are several names which one is in doubt whether to place on one side of the line or the other. But still it would be a great mistake to confound the two parties. There was a different tone of mind in the typical representatives of each. They worked for the most part in different spheres, and, though their doctrines may have accorded in the main, there were many points, especially as regards Church order and regularity, in which there was no cordial sympathy between them.

The Evangelicals have been accused of disavowing the relationship which existed between them and the Whitefield section of the Methodists. Thus in one of the most thoughtful and philosophical estimates of Methodism which has ever been published we read: 'Much that has become characteristic of Evangelic Christianity had its origin in Lady Huntingdon's drawing-room.' 'The fact of this religious transmission, which connects the venerated names of Venn, Newton, Scott, Milner, and others in no very remote manner with the founders of Methodism, might, to a reader of its history, seem too conspicuous to be called in question; nor does it very clearly appear what those manly and Christian-like feelings are which should prompt any parties at this time to deny it. A wiry task surely is it which those undertake who labour thread by thread to disengage the modern episcopal Evangelic body from the ties of filial relationship to Wesley, Whitefield, and their colleagues.'[1] A more brilliant, though less thoughtful, writer[2] asserts that 'that great body

[1] *Wesley and Methodism*, by I. Taylor, p. 129.

[2] *Edinburgh Review*, vol. lxvii. p. 521, and in an enlarged and corrected form of the same, *Essays on Ecclesiastical Biography*, by Sir James Stephen.

of the Church of England which, assuming the title of Evangelical, has been refused that of orthodox [by whom?] may trace back their spiritual genealogy by regular descent from Whitefield. . . . The consanguinity is attested by historical records, and by the strongest family resemblance. The quarterings of Whitefield are entitled to a conspicuous place in the Evangelical scutcheon, and they who bear it are not wise in being ashamed of the blazonry.' These are grave imputations, and, coming from men of the reputation of Isaac Taylor and Sir James Stephen, deserve serious attention. Few actions are rightly considered shabbier than that characterised in the homely proverb as 'kicking over the ladder on which you have mounted.' Now, this is what the charge insinuated rather than expressed in the sentences above quoted virtually amounts to. Is there really any foundation for the accusation? If there be, our respect for the Evangelical party must be considerably lessened.

But let us look into the facts of the case. Has the Evangelical body, either in the eighteenth or the present century, ever denied that Whitefield and the Wesleys, and their coadjutors, were pioneers in the great movement which *they* took up? that those good men bore the burden and heat of the day, and blunted the keen edge of prejudice, which would otherwise have assailed *them* more vehemently than it did? Surely not. But then owning this is something very different from owning that 'much which has become characteristic of Evangelic Christianity had *its origin* in Lady Huntingdon's drawing-room,' or that 'the great Evangelic body of the Church of England may trace back its spiritual genealogy to Whitefield.' All the Evangelicals would gladly own George Whitefield and Lady Huntingdon as fellow-workers in the same field as themselves. They feel proud in being able to enroll the names of such eminent Christians among their ranks. It is somewhat difficult to attach a precise meaning to metaphorical language in such a case; but if this be all that is meant by the 'quarterings of Whitefield being entitled to a conspicuous place in the Evangelical scutcheon,' no Evangelical, living or dead, would have disputed the title. But they apprehend that to trace back their genealogy to him would be to abandon what they consider,

rightly or wrongly, to be the strength of their position. They trace back their genealogy to Peter, and Paul, and John, and afterwards in a direct line to Augustine and Anselm, and Wickliffe and Hooper, and Jewell and Hooker. They think that 'much'—yea, most—'of what is characteristic of Evangelic Christianity' had its origin not in Lady Huntingdon's drawing-room, but in a far less aristocratic apartment, even in the upper room at Jerusalem 'where the disciples were assembled together for fear of the Jews.'

And though they gratefully recognise the work which Whitefield and his fellow-labourers did in clearing the way for them, they also contend that they have been somewhat embarrassed by the method which those good men thought fit to pursue. For while they own—no men more fully—the vast importance of heart-stirring preaching for the conversion of sinners, they also appreciate the value of the less showy but no less real work of the parish priest residing among his people, taking the lead in every good work, and ever preaching to them silent sermons by his life and example in their midst. They think that the startling effects of itinerant preaching are dearly purchased at the expense of regularity and Church order.

They can, moreover, prove by the unanswerable logic of facts and dates that there were many Evangelical clergy and laity in the last century who did not owe their convictions to Methodism, and who were, in fact, hampered rather than helped in their work by the irregular proceedings of the Methodists. Whether they were right or wrong is not now the question. It is sufficient to point to the fact that it was so. The lives of Walker of Truro, Hervey of Weston Favell, Venn of Huddersfield, Adams of Winteringham, to say nothing of the men of a later generation, such as Scott and Newton and the Milners, all bear witness to this fact.[1]

Of course men of the calibre of Isaac Taylor and Sir James Stephen would not make statements at random with-

[1] See the *Christian Observer* for the present year (1877), 'Biographical Sketches,' which give a very graphic account of the early Evangelicals (some of them but little known), and put the points of divergence between the Methodists and Evangelicals very forcibly and fairly. The present writer desires here to acknowledge the obligations he is under to the unknown author of these interesting sketches.

out at least some apparent foundation. And the foundation for asserting that Whitefield was virtually the founder of the Evangelical school was probably this:—The ejection of St. Bartholomew's Day, 1662, removed for a time from the English Church its Puritan element—an element which certainly represented one side, though only one side, of the English Reformation. In the nature of things it could hardly fail but that this element should in course of time show itself in the Church again; for there was much in the Church formularies, and especially in her Articles and Homilies, which plainly harmonised at least with the brighter and milder side of Puritanism. After an interval of nearly eighty years the Puritan element in the English Reformed Church again began to assert itself; and the first representative of this revived element who made his influence generally felt beyond the limits of a narrow circle, though by no means the first who existed, was George Whitefield. Hence arose the impression that Whitefield should be regarded as a sort of founder of the Evangelical, or, as it has been sometimes inaccurately termed, the modern Puritan, school in the Church. But, as a matter of fact, that school had never ceased to exist; it had never been stamped out; the most that can be said is that it had become too weak to be called a power in the Church. All honour to men like Whitefield, who, by their burning words, their inexhaustible energy, and their nobly devoted lives, helped the party to raise its head again. Such credit the later Evangelical party would gladly have accorded to Whitefield, but they rightly demurred to the acknowledgment that he was in any sense their founder.

The difficulty—indeed, the impossibility—of disentangling Evangelicalism from Methodism in the early phases of both confronts us at once when we begin to consider the cases of individuals.

Among the first in date of the Evangelicals proper we must place *James Hervey* (1714–1758), the once popular author of 'Meditations and Contemplations' and 'Theron and Aspasio.' But then Hervey was one of the original Methodists. He was an undergraduate of Lincoln College at the same time that John Wesley was Fellow, and soon came under the influence of that powerful mind; and he kept up

an intimacy with the founder of Methodism long after he left college. Yet it is evidently more correct to class Hervey among the Evangelicals than among the Methodists; for in all the points of divergence between the two schools he sided with the former. He was a distinct Calvinist;[1] he was always engaged in parochial work, and he not only took no part in itinerant work, but expressed his decided disapproval of those clergy who did so, venturing even to remonstrate with his former Mentor on his irregularities.

There are few incidents in Hervey's short and uneventful life which require notice. It was simply that of a good country parson. The disinterestedness and disregard for wealth, which honourably distinguished almost all the Methodist and Evangelical clergy from too many of their brethren in that age of preferment-hunting, were conspicuous features in Hervey's character. His father held two livings near Northampton—Weston Favell and Collington—but, though the joint incomes only amounted to 180*l.* a year, and though the villages were both of small population and not far apart, Hervey for some time scrupled to be a pluralist; and it was only in order to provide for the wants of an aged mother and a sister that he at length consented to hold both livings. He solemnly devoted the whole produce of his literary labours to the service of humanity, and, though his works were remunerative beyond his most sanguine expectations, he punctually kept his vow. He is said to have given no less than 700*l.* in seven years in charity—in most cases concealing his name. Nothing more need be said about his quiet, blameless, useful life.

[1] But at the same time a very modest and moderate one. 'Predestination,' he wrote, 'and reprobation I think of with fear and trembling; and, if I should attempt to study them, I would study them on my knees.' (Letter, dated Miles's Lane, March 24, 1752, quoted by Mr. Tyerman in his *Oxford Methodists*, p. 270.) And again: 'As for points of doubtful disputation, those especially which relate to *particular* or *universal* redemption, I profess myself attached neither to the one nor the other. I neither think of them myself nor preach of them to others. If they happen to be started in conversation, I always endeavour to divert the discourse to some more edifying topic. I have often observed them to breed animosity and division, but never knew them to be productive of love and unanimity. . . . Therefore I rest satisfied in this general and indisputable truth, that the Judge of all the earth will assuredly do right,' &c. This, however, was written in 1747 (see Tyerman, 254). Perhaps when he wrote *Theron and Aspasio* some years later his views were somewhat changed.

It is as an author that James Hervey is best known to us. The popularity which his writings long enjoyed presents to us a curious phenomenon. Almost to this day old-fashioned libraries of divinity are not complete without the 'Meditations' and 'Theron and Aspasio,' though probably they are not often read in this age.[1] But by Hervey's contemporaries his books were not only bought, but read and admired. They were translated into almost every modern language. The fact that such works were popular, not among the uneducated, but among those who called themselves people of culture, almost justifies John Wesley's caustic exclamation, 'How hard it is to be superficial enough for a polite audience!' Hervey's style can be described in no meaner terms than as the extra-superfine style. It is prose run mad. Let the reader judge for himself. Here are some specimens of his 'Meditations among the Tombs.' The tomb of an infant suggests the following reflections: 'The peaceful infant, staying only to wash away its native impurity in the laver of regeneration, bid a speedy adieu to time and terrestrial things. What did the little hasty sojourner find so forbidding and disgustful in our upper world to occasion its precipitate exit?' The tomb of a young lady calls forth the following morbid horrors:—'Instead of the sweet and winning aspect, that wore perpetually an attractive smile, grins horribly a naked, ghastly skull. The eye that outshone the diamond's brilliancy, and glanced its lovely lightning into the most guarded heart—alas! where is it? Where shall we find the rolling sparkler? How are all its sprightly beams eclipsed!' The tongue, flesh, &c., are dwelt upon in the same fashion. Here are some general reflections upon death: 'Not long ago I happened to spy a thoughtless jay. The poor bird was idly busied in dressing its pretty plumes, or hopping careless from spray to spray. A sportsman coming by observes the feathered rover. Immediately he lifts his tube and levels his blow; swifter than whirlwind flies the leaden death and lays the silly creature breathless on the ground. Such is the fate of man,'

[1] Mr. Tyerman, however, thinks otherwise. 'After the lapse of a hundred years,' he writes (*Oxford Methodists*, p. 201), 'since the author's death, few are greater favourites at the present day.'

&c.[1] Here are some of his 'Reflections on a Flower Garden:' 'Abundance of ruddy streaks tinge the fleeces of the firmament, till at length the dappled aspect of the east is lost in one ardent and boundless blush. Is it the surmise of imagination, or do the skies really redden with shame to see so many supinely stretched on their downy pillows?'

Perhaps the most painful specimens of Hervey's style are to be found in his paraphrases of Scripture. It is somewhat difficult to recognise the touching language of David in the fifty-first Psalm under this disguise:—'I have been guilty, I must confess, of the most complicated and shocking crimes, crimes inflamed by every aggravating circumstance with regard to myself, my neighbour, and my God—myself, who have been blessed above men and the distinguished favourite of Providence, &c. . . . Yet, all horrid and execrable as my offence is, it is nothing to the superabundant merit of that great Redeemer who was promised from the foundation of the world. Though my conscience be more loathsome with adulterous impurity than the dunghill, though treachery and murder have rendered it even black as the gloom of hell, yet, washed in the fountain for sin and for uncleanness, I shall be, I say not pure only—this were a disparagement to the efficacy of my Saviour's death—but I shall be fair as the lily, white as the rose. Nay, let me not derogate from the glorious object of my confidence; cleansed by this sovereign, sanctifying stream, I shall be *fairer* than the full-blown lily, whiter than the new-fallen snow.'[2] It is hard to believe that this was really considered fine writing by our ancestors, but the fact is indisputable. The 'Meditations' brought in a clear gain of 700*l.* Dr. Blair, himself a model of taste in his day, spoke in high terms of approbation of Hervey's writings. Boswell records with evident astonishment that Dr. Johnson 'thought slightingly of this admired book' (the 'Meditations'); 'he treated it with ridicule, and parodied it in a "Meditation on a Pudding."'[3] Most modern readers will be surprised that any sensible people could think otherwise than Dr. Johnson did

[1] See *Meditations and Contemplations*, by the Rev. James Hervey, with Life of Author, *passim*.

[2] Id., 'Contemplations on the Starry Heavens,' p. 138.

[3] Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, v. 93.

of such a farrago of high-flown sentiment clothed in the most turgid language.

It is a pity that Hervey could not learn to be less bombastic in his style and less vapid in his sentiments, for, after all, he had an eye for the sublime and beautiful both in the world around him and in the heavens above his head—a faculty very rare in the age in which he lived, and especially in the school to which he belonged. Even Whitefield and the Wesleys, although in their incessant journeys in all parts of the British Isles and in America they must have constantly passed through the most beautiful scenery, and had the opportunity of observing Nature in all her endless varieties, do not seem to have been much impressed with her beauties, and rarely drew spiritual lessons from what they saw around them. Occasionally Hervey condescends to be more simple and natural, and consequently more readable. Here and there one meets with a passage which almost reminds one of Addison, but such exceptions are rare.[1]

Ten years after the publication of the first volume of the 'Meditations' (1745) Hervey published (1755) three volumes of 'Dialogues between Theron and Aspasio,' with a view to recommend to 'people of elegant manners and polite accomplishments' the Calvinistic theology, and more especially the doctrine of Christ's imputed righteousness stated Calvinistically. The style of these 'Dialogues' is not quite so absurd as that of the 'Meditations,' but still it is inflated enough. The disputants always converse in the highly genteel manner. But the book was suited to the public taste, and was almost as successful as its predecessor. 'I write for the poor,' wrote Whitefield to the author, 'you for the polite and noble.' The aim of the treatise is expressed in the work itself. 'Let us endeavour to make religious conversation, which is in all respects desirable, in some degree fashionable.'

Hervey seems to have felt that he was treading upon debatable ground when he wrote this work; and therefore, acting upon the principle that 'in the multitude of counsellors is wisdom,' he distributed different parts of his manuscript

[1] See especially *Meditations among the Tombs*, p. 29, the passage beginning, 'Since we are so liable to be dispossessed of this earthly tabernacle,' &c.

among his friends before publication, and adopted, on their advice, a variety of alterations. Among others he consulted John Wesley—of all men in the world—Wesley, who never used two words where one would suffice, and never chose a long word where he could find a short one to express his meaning[1]—Wesley, too, who disliked everything savouring of Calvinism, and who was not likely, therefore, to regard with a favourable eye a Calvinistic treatise written in a diffuse and turgid style. Hervey's biographer tells us that Wesley gave his opinion without tenderness or reserve—condemned the language, reprobated the doctrines, and tried to invalidate the proofs.[2] The writer owns that there was 'good sense in some of the remarks,' but thinks that 'their dogmatical language and dictatorial style entirely prevented their effect.'[3] Toplady also censures the 'rancour with which Mr. Hervey and his works were treated by Wesley.[4] We may well believe that Wesley, one of whose infirmities it was to write rough letters, would not be particularly complimentary. But surely Hervey should have known his man better than to have placed him in such an awkward predicament. It should be remembered, too, that Wesley looked upon Hervey as his spiritual son, and therefore felt himself to some extent responsible for his theological views and literary performances. It should also be borne in mind that Hervey was an undergraduate at Lincoln College when Wesley was a don. All who know the relationship which exists or existed between dons and undergraduates will be aware that the former often feel themselves privileged to address their quondam pupils with a freedom which others would not venture to use.

Those who judge of Hervey by his works might be tempted to think that he was affected and unreal. In fact, he was quite the reverse. When writing for the polite world,[5]

[1] 'I dare no more write in a *fine style*,' he said, 'than wear a fine coat. . . . I should purposely decline what many admire—a highly ornamental style.'

[2] Hervey's *Letters* in answer to Wesley were published after his death, against his own wish, expressed when he was dying.

[3] Hervey's *Meditations*, &c., *ut supra*, *Life*.

[4] Toplady's *Works*, i. 102.

[5] 'My writings,' he wrote to Lady F. Shirley, 'are not fit for ordinary people; I never give them to such persons, and dissuade this class of men from procuring them. O that they may be of some service to the more refined part of the world!'

his style was odiously florid; but his sermons for his simple parishioners were plain and natural both in style and substance. Personally he was a man of simple habits and genuine piety, a good son and brother, an excellent parish priest, and a patient sufferer under many physical infirmities. He had no exaggerated opinion of his own intellectual powers. 'My friend,' he said to Mr. Ryland, 'I have not a strong mind; I have not powers fitted for arduous researches; but I think I have a power of writing in somewhat of a striking manner, so far as to please mankind and recommend my dear Redeemer.'[1] This was really the great object of his life, 'to recommend his dear Redeemer;' and if he effected this object by writing what may appear to us poor stuff, we need not quarrel with him, but may rather be thankful that he did not write in vain.

Grimshaw of Haworth (1708–1763) was another clergyman of the last century who formed a connecting link between the Methodists proper and the later Evangelical school. On the one hand, he was an intimate friend of the Wesleys and other leaders of the Methodist movement, both lay and clerical; he welcomed them at Haworth and lent them his pulpit; he took part in the work of itinerancy, and, in fact, threw himself heart and soul into the Methodist cause. On the other hand, he was, from the beginning to the end of his ministerial career, a parochial clergyman; he does not appear to have been indebted to Methodism for his first serious impressions, and he maintained his position as a moderate Calvinist, though he wisely kept quite clear of the controversy and never came into collision with his friend Wesley on this fruitful subject of dispute. The scenes of his energetic and successful labours were the moors about Haworth, the bleak physical desolation of which was only too true a picture of the moral and spiritual desolation of their population before this good man awakened them to spiritual life. The eccentricities of 'mad Grimshaw' have probably been exaggerated; for one knows how, when a man acquires a reputation of this sort, every ridiculous story which happens to be current is apt to be fathered upon him. No doubt he *was* eccentric; he possessed a quaint humour which was not

[1] *Life of Hervey*, prefixed to his *Meditations*, *ut supra*.

unusual in the early Evangelical school; but he never allowed himself to be so far carried away by this spirit as to bring ridicule upon the cause which he had at heart.

If it were the object of these sketches to make people laugh, Grimshaw's life would furnish us with a fruitful subject of amusement. How he dressed himself up as an old woman in order to discover who were the disturbers of his cottage lectures; how he sold his Alderney cow because 'she would follow him up into the pulpit;' how a visitor at Haworth looked out of his bedroom window one morning and saw to his horror the vicar cleaning his guest's boots; how he is said (though this anecdote is rather apocryphal) once to have made his congregation sing all the 176 verses of the 119th Psalm, while he went out to beat up the wanderers to attend public worship; how he once interrupted a preacher who was congratulating the Haworth people on the advantages they enjoyed under a Gospel ministry, by crying out in a loud voice, 'No, no, sir, don't flatter them; they are most of them going to Hell with their eyes open'; these and many other such stories might be told at full length.[1] But it is more profitable to dwell upon the noble, disinterested work which he did, quite unrecognised by the great men of his day, in a district which had sore need of such apostolical labours. His last words were, 'Here goes an unprofitable servant'—words which are no doubt true in the mouths of the best of men; but if any man might have boasted that he had done profitable service in his Master's cause, that man would have been William Grimshaw.

There is a strong family likeness between Grimshaw and *Berridge of Everton* (1716–1793), but the marked features of the character were more conspicuous in the latter than in the former. Both were energetic country parsons, and both itinerated; but Berridge went over a wider field than Grimshaw. Both were oddities; but the oddities of Berridge were more outrageous than than those of Grimshaw. Both were stirring preachers; but the effects of Berridge's preaching were more startling if not more satisfactory than those which attended Grimshaw. Both were Calvinists; but Berridge's Calvinism was of the more marked type of the two.

[1] See Ryle's *Christian Leaders of the Last Century.*

Moreover, Berridge rushed into the very thick of the Calvinistic controversy, from which Grimshaw held aloof. Berridge was the better read and the more highly trained man of the two. He was a Fellow of Clare Hall, Cambridge, and before his conversion he was much sought after, and that by men of great eminence, as a wit and an amusing boon companion. The parish church of Everton was constantly the scene of those violent physical symptoms which present a somewhat puzzling phenomenon to the student of early Methodism. Berridge's eccentricities, both in the pulpit and out of it, caused pain to the more sober-minded of the Evangelical party. Thus we find John Thornton expostulating with him in the following terms: 'The Tabernacle people are in general wild and enthusiastic, and delight in anything out of the common, which is a temper of mind, though in some respects necessary, yet should never be encouraged. If you and some few others, who have the greatest influence over them, would use the curb instead of the spur, I am persuaded the effects would be very blessed. You told me you was born with a fool's cap on. Pray, my dear sir, is it not high time it was pulled off?' Berridge, in his reply, admits the impeachment, but cannot resist giving Thornton a Roland for his Oliver. 'A fool's cap,' he writes, 'is not put off so readily as a night-cap. One cleaves to the head, and one to the heart. It has been a matter of surprise to me, how Dr. Conyers could accept of Deptford living, and how Mr. Thornton could present him to it. Has not lucre led him to Deptford, and has not a family connection ruled your private judgment?'[1]

Specimens of Berridge's odd style and occasionally bad taste have already been given in connection with Lady Huntingdon, and need not here be multiplied. It was no doubt questionable propriety to say that 'nature lost her legs in paradise and has not found them since,' or that 'an angel might preach such doctrine as was commonly preached till his wings dropped off without doing any good,' or to tell us that 'he once went to Jesus as a coxcomb and gave himself fine airs.' But it is far more easy to laugh at and to criticise the foibles of the good man than to imitate his devotedness to

[1] See *Life of Lady Huntingdon*, i. 374.

his Master's service, and the moral courage which enabled him to exchange the dignified position and learned leisure of a University don for the harassing life and despised position of a Methodist preacher—for so the Vicar of Everton would have been termed in his own day.

The Evangelical revival drew within the sphere of its influence men of the most opposite characters. It would be difficult to conceive a more complete contrast than that which *William Romaine* (1714–1795) presented to the two worthies last mentioned. Grave, severe, self-restrained, and, except to those who knew him intimately, somewhat repellent in manners, Romaine would have been quite unfitted for the work which Grimshaw and Berridge, in spite—or, shall we say, in consequence?—of their boisterous bonhomie and occasionally ill-timed jocularity were able to do. The farmers and working men of Haworth or Everton would assuredly have gone to sleep under his preaching, or stayed away from church altogether. One can scarcely fancy Romaine itinerating at all; but if he had done so, the bleak moors of Yorkshire or the cottage homes of Bedfordshire would not have been suitable spheres for his labours. But where he was, he was the right man in the right place. Among the grave and decorous citizens who attended the city churches, and among the educated congregations who flocked to hear him at St. George's, Hanover Square, Romaine was appreciated. Both in his character and in his writings Romaine approached more nearly than any of the so-called Puritans of his day to the typical Puritan of the seventeenth century. He was like one born out of due time. One can fancy him more at home with Flavel, Howe, and Baxter, than with Whitefield, Berridge, and Grimshaw. Did we not know its date, we might have imagined that the 'Life, Walk, and Triumph of Faith' was written a hundred years before it actually was. Its very style and language were archaic in the eighteenth century. Romaine, indeed, thoroughly won the sympathy of the generation in which he lived, or at any rate of the school to which he belonged. But it was a work of time. He was at Oxford at the time of the rise of Methodism, but appears to have held no communication with its promoters. In another respect he differed from almost all the Evangelicals. There

was apparently no transition, either abrupt or gradual, in his views. The only change which we can trace in his career is the change in his outer life from the learned leisure of a six years' residence at Oxford and ten years in a country curacy to the more active sphere of duty of a London clergyman. The mere fact that a man of his high reputation for learning and his irreproachable life should have been left unbeneficed until he had reached the ripe age of fifty-two, is another proof of the suspicion with which Methodism was regarded; for no doubt he was early suspected of being tainted with Methodism. He belonged to Lady Huntingdon's Connexion until the 'secession' of 1781, when, like Venn and other parochial clergymen, he was compelled to withdraw from formal union, though he still retained the closest intimacy with her. He was for some time her senior chaplain, and her adviser and assistant on all occasions. Although he differed from John Wesley on the disputed points of Arminianism and sinless perfection more widely than any of his co-religionists, he appears to have retained the affection of that great man after others had lost it; for we find Wesley writing to Lady Huntingdon in 1763, 'Only Mr. Romaine has shown a truly sympathising spirit, and acted the part of a brother.' Indeed, although Romaine was quite ready to enter into the lists of controversy with Warburton and others whom he considered to be outside the Evangelical pale, he seems to have held aloof from the disputes which distracted those within that pale. 'Things are not here,' [in London] he writes to Lady Huntingdon, 'as at Brighthelmstone; Foundry, Tabernacle, Lock, Meeting, yea and St. Dunstan's itself, [his own church] has each its party, and brotherly love is almost lost in our disputes. Thank God, I am out of them.'

Romaine's Calvinism was of a more extreme type than that of most of the Evangelicals. He was no Antinomian himself, but one can well believe that his teaching might easily be perverted to Antinomian purposes. Wilberforce has an entry in his journal for 1795: 'Dined with old Newton, where met Henry Thornton and Macaulay. Newton very calm and pleasing. Owned that Romaine had made many Antinomians.'[1] It seems not improbable that

[1] *Life of Wilberforce*, by his Sons, vol. ii. p. 137.

Thomas Scott, when he spoke of 'great names sanctioning Antinomianism,' had Romaine in view; at any rate, there is no contemporary 'great name' to whom the remark would apply with equal force. As instances of what is meant, we may take the following passages from the 'Life and Walk of Faith':[1]— He is of a legal spirit who is under the law, and apprehends himself bound to keep it as the condition of life requiring of him, Do this, and thou shalt live.' 'There is in us all a continual leaning to the law, and a desire to attain righteousness by the works of it. We are all wedded to this way of gaining God's favour.' 'Why dost thou disquiet thyself about attaining the righteousness of the law, and thereby suffer the law to disturb the peace of thy conscience, since thou hast a far better righteousness, which ought to reign there, even the righteousness which is of God by faith? For thou art a believer; and although a weak one, yet thou hast as good a title to Christ and his righteousness as the strongest believer in the world.' 'Believers will never live comfortably till they see the law dead and buried, and then willingly give themselves up to be espoused to Christ, who will make them free indeed.' 'Thou art not bound to keep its [the law's] precepts, in order to have life for thy obedience. Thy Surety undertook to act and suffer for thee. He was to answer the law, in its commands and demands, to every jot and tittle. . . . And he has absolutely discharged thee from it as a law of works. Thou art to have nothing to do with it in that view.' 'Remember thou art not required to obey in order to be saved for thine obedience, but thou art already saved; and therefore out of gratitude to thy dearest Saviour, thou art bound to love him and obey him, not *for* life but *from* life.' Of course there is a sense in which every Christian who admits that we are saved through grace will agree with Romaine. But the principle stated as Romaine states it, without the counterbalancing statements of the duty of obedience, runs perilously near to the verge of Antinomianism; and at a time when Antinomianism was doing fatal damage to the cause of Christianity, the danger of such

[1] See *Life, Walk, and Triumph of Faith*, by W. Romaine especially pp. 192, 99, 98, 149, 158, 182, 192, 28, 40, 227, 229, 232, 233, 274, 275, 286, 287, 321.

statements was not imaginary. There is a similar danger in Romaine's mode of stating the doctrine of final perseverance. 'He cannot cease to be a Father, and they cannot cease to be his children; for if one of them could, they all might. And then, his covenant purpose to bring many sons unto glory would be defeated; his relation to them as a Father would be broken; he would be a Father without children.' The fatal logic of those who argued that a man might always know for a certainty when he was a believer, and that one who was once a believer must always be a believer, no matter what sins he might fall into, if it be not actually sanctioned might be indirectly, though unintentionally, encouraged by such arguments as the following:—'This is the wonderful contrivance of the Three in covenant. The Father accepted his coequal Son in the place of his people, and his obedience unto death in their stead; he is now perfectly reconciled to them in Jesus. . . . I have his word for it [my salvation], confirmed by promise, ratified by the covenant oath of the Blessed Trinity. These engagements cannot be broken. On the part of the Divine covenanters all is sure. They have given me the fullest security that can be. I shall be kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation.' The passage last quoted illustrates another feature of extreme Calvinism which is more conspicuous in Romaine than in the generality of the Evangelical school in the eighteenth century. Conscious irreverence was very far indeed from being in Romaine's thoughts. Neither would it be correct to say that his conception of the Deity was anthropomorphic. Still he has a way of stating doctrines, very common among the Puritans of the seventeenth century, which jars upon the feelings of many who realise the immense distance there is between God and man. Such descriptions as the following, though it is fully admitted that there is a real element of truth in them, are yet expressed in such a way as not only to give one the idea of anthropomorphism, but even to represent not the highest type of man:—'His mercy has no motive but his own will. It is from mine own freedom and sovereignty that I have mercy on any sinners. It is from mine own mere love that I have determined to be gracious to them; only my love has determined to save them, and the way also in which I will

save them. I have appointed the end and the means at the same time. Of mine own motive and good will I have resolved to give my Son for them, and my Spirit to them.' 'God aims at his own glory in all his mercies. Thy Father calls upon thee to do good, that he may be glorified thereby.' The notions of arbitrariness and self-glorification are not notions which we associate with the highest types of manhood, and they are the very last which we should attribute to the Godhead. Many other expressions in this remarkable work (for it *is* a remarkable work in spite of its drawbacks) remind one much more of the earlier Puritanism than of the later Evangelicalism. Take, for instance, the following:—'A natural man has no sense of his indwelling sins, because they are in him *as worms in a dead body*; just so it is with the perfectionist.' 'Man is born as ignorant of God *as a wild ass's colt*.' 'The Hottentots knew as much of God as the Greeks and Romans did.' It need scarcely be said that with his strong Calvinism Romaine felt great repugnance against John Wesley's doctrine of sinless perfection, and he expressed himself against it with characteristic force. 'If,' he wrote, 'I should fancy myself in a state of sinless perfection, the Holy Ghost charges me with self-deceit. A dreadful delusion! arising from the pride of my heart and its rebellion against God, and discovering the most gross ignorance of God's righteousness, &c.; but if I was to say as well as to think it, I should tell a great lie.' It should be added in conclusion that the 'Life, &c., of Faith' possesses the strength as well as the defects of early Puritanism. It is, perhaps, on the whole, the strongest book, and its author was the strongest man of any who appeared among the Evangelicals. To find his equal we must go back to the previous century.

We have hitherto been tracing the work of the Evangelical clergy in remote country villages and in London. We have now to turn to one whose most important work was done in a different sphere from either. *Henry Venn* (1724–1797) is chiefly known as Vicar of Huddersfield, though he only held that post for twelve out of the seventy-three years of his life. Like all the rest of the Evangelical clergy whom we have noticed, Venn was a connecting link between the Methodists and the Evangelicals proper. Like Romaine, he be-

longed to Lady Huntingdon's Connexion until the secession of 1781. He was also in the habit of itinerating during the early part of his Evangelical ministry. He was on the most intimate terms with the Wesleys and Whitefield, and thoroughly identified himself with their practical work. But his son tells us in his most interesting biography that his views changed on this matter. 'Induced,' he writes, 'by the hope of doing good, my father in certain instances preached in unconsecrated places. But having acknowledged this, it becomes my pleasing duty to state that he was no advocate for irregularity in others; that when he afterwards considered it in its different bearings and connections, he lamented that he had given way to it, and restrained several other persons from such acts by the most cogent arguments.' The dispute between Venn and John Wesley as to whether the Methodist preachers should be withdrawn from parishes where an Evangelical incumbent was appointed has been already noticed.

The career of Henry Venn is particularly interesting and important, because it shows us not only the points of contact between the Methodists and Evangelicals, but also their points of divergence. In spite of his itinerancy and his strong sympathy with the Methodist leaders, Venn furnishes a more marked type of the rising Evangelical school than any whom we have yet noticed. Apart from his literary work, it was as a parish priest rather than as an Evangelist that Venn made his mark. His preaching at Huddersfield was unquestionably most effective; but its effect was at least as much due to the great respect which he inspired, the disinterestedness of his whole life and work, the affectionate earnestness and sound practical sense of his counsel—in short, to his pastoral efforts—as to his mere oratory. Again, the Calvinism of Henry Venn was distinctly that of the later Evangelical school rather than that of Whitefield and Romaine. 'He had hitherto,' writes his biographer,[1] 'been a zealous Arminian, hostile to Calvinism, which he considered repugnant to Scripture and reason; but the experience he

[1] 'Memoir of the Author,' prefixed to Venn's *Complete Duty of Man* (new ed. London, Religious Tract Society), p. xiii. preface 3.

now had of the corruption of his nature, of the frailty and weakness of man, of the insufficiency of his best endeavours, led him to ascribe more to the grace of God, and less to the power and free-will of man. This change gave a tincture to his preaching; he exalted in higher strains the grace and love of God in Christ, and spoke less of the power and excellence of man. But his Calvinism stopped here. It was not the result of a theory embraced by reading books of that class; he did not attempt to reconcile the difficulties which are found in that system; he did not enforce as necessary upon others those particular views which he had himself imbibed; he did not break the bond of brotherly love and union with those of his friends who were still zealous Arminians; and, above all, it did not lead him to relax his views on the necessity and nature of holiness. Rather, he urged the practice of it more effectually from what he conceived to be stronger and purer motives. Once when asked about a young minister, whether he was a Calvinist or Arminian, he replied: 'I really do not know; he is a sincere disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ, and that is of infinitely more importance than his being a disciple of Calvin or Arminius.' In short, he was what was called a 'moderate Calvinist'—a term which was much cavilled at in the hot days of the Calvinistic controversy, but which really expressed the form which the Calvinism of the Evangelical school ultimately assumed. He was a Calvinist of precisely the same type as Newton, and Scott, and Cecil, and the two Milners.

As this phase of Calvinism first meets us in connection with the name of Henry Venn, the present seems to be the proper place to consider what it really meant. By 'moderate Calvinism' is understood that frame of mind which loved especially to dwell upon man's utter unworthiness of the least of God's mercies, of his entire helplessness in spiritual things, and his need of God's grace 'preventing him that he may have a good will, and following him when he has that good-will.' It is well expressed in the beautiful verse of the old hymn—

> Nothing in my hand I bring,
> Simply to Thy Cross I cling;

Naked, come to Thee for dress,
Helpless, look to Thee for grace;
Vile, I to the Fountain fly,
Wash me, Saviour, or I die.

The spiritual pride which extreme Calvinism is apt to engender, by teaching 'the elect' to regard themselves as Heaven's peculiar favourites, was utterly alien to the spirit of Venn and others who called themselves Calvinists. The exclamation, 'Why me, why me!' so frequent among the earlier Calvinists, is never found in their writings. They did not love to write and talk about what Wesley calls 'their dear decrees.' They never dwelt upon the awful doctrine of reprobation, nor did they ever deny that the most hardened had or might have had a day of grace. To associate Antinomianism in any shape or form with the teaching of such men as Venn is simply ridiculous. Their doctrine was so carefully guarded that it was hardly possible to pervert it to the purposes of licentiousness; and, so far as we are aware, it was never so perverted. 'Venn,' writes his biographer,[1] with pardonable indignation, 'was assailed with the old insinuation that he preached the doctrine of faith alone to the neglect of works, though his whole life was a practical refutation of such a falsehood, and the lives of those who received his doctrine became so exemplary and strict that they were immediately accused of carrying holiness to an unnecessary length.' The fallacy of supposing that such Calvinism leads to the depreciation of works is solved by undeniable facts. These so-called Calvinists were the originators or supporters of every philanthropic no less than of every religious effort which was made. This will abundantly appear in the sequel.

Venn's closing years were very calm and happy. Worn out before his time in his Master's work, he was obliged to exchange at the early age of forty-seven the harass of a large town parish for the quiet of a country village. More than a quarter of a century he passed in the peaceful retirement of Yelling; but he was not idle. He faithfully attended to his little parish, he trained up his family with admirable judgment in the principles of piety, and had the satisfaction

[1] *Memoir of Venn, ut supra*, p. xiii.

of living to see his sons walking in his steps. One of them, John, became the respected and useful rector of Clapham, to which place Henry Venn retired to die. There are few names which are more highly esteemed among the Evangelical party than the honoured name of Venn.

Henry Venn earned an honourable name as a writer no less than as a pastor and preacher. It is not necessary here to dwell upon the few sermons of his which are extant, and which probably give us a very inadequate idea of his preaching power; nor yet upon his correspondence, although it deserves a high place among those letters which form a conspicuous feature in the literature of the eighteenth century. But he wrote one work which requires further notice. The 'Complete Duty of Man' would, if nothing else did, prevent his name from sinking into oblivion. It deserves to live for its intrinsic merits. It is one of the few instances of a devotional book which is not unreadable. It is not, like some of the class, full of mawkish sentimentality; nor, like others, so high-flown that it cannot be used for practical purposes by ordinary mortals without a painful sense of unreality; nor, like others, so intolerably dull as to disgust the reader with the subject which it designs to recommend. It is written in a fine, manly, sensible strain of practical piety. Venn's Huddersfield experience no doubt stood him in good stead when he wrote this little treatise; the faithful pastor had been wont to give advice orally to many an anxious inquirer, and he put forth in print the counsel which he had found to be most effectual among his appreciative parishioners. It is this fact, that it is evidently the work of a man of practical experience, which constitutes the chief merit of the book. Regarded as a literary composition, it by no means attains a high rank, for its style is somewhat heavy and its arguments are not very deep. If we would appreciate its excellence we must take it simply as the counsel of a sincere and affectionate friend. Among the devotional books of the century[1] it stands perhaps only second—*longo sed proximus intervallo*—

[1] Or perhaps we should have said 'of the Evangelical school;' only, Law can hardly be said to have belonged to that school. Bishop Wilson's *Sacra Privata*, and other devotional works, and some of Bishop Ken's devotional works, rank intellectually, at any rate, far above Venn's *Complete Duty of Man*.

to the great work which, more than any other, originated the Evangelical revival. This, after all, is not necessarily very high praise; for the devotional books of the eighteenth century do not reach a very high degree of excellence;[1] with the single exception of the 'Serious Call,' not one of them can be compared with the best of the preceding century—with Jeremy Taylor's 'Holy Living and Holy Dying,' for instance, or Baxter's 'Call to the Unconverted,' or his 'Saint's Everlasting Rest,' or Howe's 'Living Temple.'

But there is an historical interest in the 'Complete Duty of Man' quite apart from its intrinsic merits. It may be regarded generally as a sort of manifesto of the Evangelical party; and specially as a counterblast against the defective theology of what Whitefield called 'England's greatest favourite, "The Whole Duty of Man."' The very title of Venn's work indicates its relationship to that once famous book. The 'Whole Duty of Man' was written anonymously in the days of the Commonwealth, when Calvinism had in too many cases degenerated into Antinomianism. The author, in his anxiety to avoid the latter error, appealed too little to distinctively Christian motives. His theology was of the old-fashioned cut-and-dried 'legal' type, and the work was regarded with great abhorrence by the Evangelical school. Warnings against its errors are of frequent occurrence among Evangelical writings. It has been seen how Whitefield with characteristic rashness declared that its author knew no more of Christianity than Mahomet; and afterwards, with equally characteristic candour, owned that he had been far too severe in his condemnation. Cowper called it 'that repository of self-righteousness and pharisaical lumber.'[2] Berridge equally condemned it. Much more testimony to the same effect might be given. There was, then, ample room for a treatise which should aim at the same purpose as the 'Whole Duty of

[1] Here again we must except Bishop Wilson, who, except in point of date, hardly seems to belong to the eighteenth century. He was as one born out of due time. We must except, too, some of the works of those High Churchmen of the old type, who lived on into the eighteenth century, but who, in their lives and writings, reflected the spirit of a past age—a spirit which breathes in every prayer of our Liturgy, but which is very rarely seen in the eighteenth century, or, for the matter of that, in the nineteenth.

[2] Southey's *Life of Cowper*, i. 117.

Man,' but which should enforce its teaching on different principles. This want 'The Complete Duty' supplied, and in its day supplied well. It was written from a Calvinistic point of view; but its Calvinism differed widely from that, for instance, of Romaine. A comparison between it and the 'Life, Walk, and Triumph of Faith' marks the decided difference between two types of Calvinists. Both books, it is presumed, were intended to be practical treatises; but, whereas the one treats but very little of directly practical duties, the full half—and the best and most interesting half—of the other is exclusively concerned with them. Having fully stated in his opening chapters the distinctive doctrines upon which alone he thinks sound morality can be based, Venn in the rest of his treatise enters with the utmost minuteness into the practical duties of the Christian to God and man. Truth fulness, honesty, meekness, courtesy, candour, the relative duties in various capacities—of masters towards their servants and servants towards their masters, of parents towards their children and children towards their parents, and the like, are all fully dwelt upon.

For convenience' sake we have spoken of the *later* Evangelicalism as distinguished from the *earlier* Methodism. But it would be inaccurate to represent the one simply as the successor of the other. The two movements were, to a certain extent, contemporaneous, and were for a time so blended together that it is difficult to separate them. Besides the clergy already noticed, there were several others scattered throughout the country who clearly belonged to the Evangelicals rather than to the Methodists. Such a one was Walker of Truro (1714–1761), who, by his own personal work and by his influence over other clergy, contributed largely to the spread of the Evangelical revival in the west of England. Such a one was Adams of Winteringham, the author of a once very popular devotional book, entitled 'Private Thoughts,' and his friend and neighbour Archdeacon Bassett of Glentworth. Such a one was Augustus Toplady, about whom enough has been said in connection with the Calvinistic controversy. On the crucial test, which separated Methodism proper from Evangelicalism proper, these and several others of less note were decidedly on the side of Evangelicalism.

While agreeing thoroughly with Methodist doctrines (we may waive the vexed question of Calvinism), they thoroughly disapproved of the Methodist practice of itinerancy, which they regarded as a mark of insubordination, a breach of Church order, and an unwarrantable interference with the parochial system.[1] We find Hervey, and Walker, and Adams all expostulating with Wesley on his irregularities, and endeavouring to persuade him, though quite ineffectually, to submit to Church discipline and listen to the commands of his Church rulers. Wesley, on his part, thought that such clergy were a mere rope of sand. Berridge predicted that, after the death of the individuals, their congregations would be absorbed in the Dissenting sects. Neither seems to have contemplated the possibility of what actually took place, viz. the formation of a strong party within the Church, quite as much attached to parochial order and quite as obedient to the Church rulers as the highest of High Churchmen. It has been asserted, and apparently not without reason, that these early Evangelicals found more sympathy among the pious Dissenters than they did among the Methodists, though they were constantly confounded with the latter.[2]

It was not, however, until the later years of the century that the scattered handful of clergy, who held these views, swelled into a large and compact body, which, to this day, has continued to form a great and influential section of the Church of England. The Calvinistic controversy of 1771–1776, the secession of Lady Huntingdon's Connexion in 1781, and the subsequent enrolment of the Wesleyan body, which was found necessary in order to secure their protection under the Toleration Act, all tended to bring about this result. We may now take our final leave of the Methodists, and turn to those who belonged exclusively to the party of Evangelical Churchmen.

The first name which claims our attention in this connection is that of *John Newton* (1725–1807). No character connected with the Evangelical revival is presented to us with

[1] See 'Biographical Sketches' in the *Christian Observer* for 1877 referred to above.

[2] *Christian Observer* for February, 1877.

greater vividness and distinctness than his, and no character is on the whole a more lovable one. It has frequently been objected that Christians of the Puritan and Evangelical schools—when describing their conversion—have been apt to exaggerate their former depravity. There may be some force in the objection, but it does not apply to John Newton. The moral and even physical degradation from which he was rescued can hardly be exaggerated. An infidel, a blasphemer, a sensualist, a corrupter of others, despised by the very negroes among whom his lot was cast, such was Newton in his earlier years. Those who desire to learn the details of this part of his life may be referred to his own harrowing—sometimes even repulsive—narrative, or to the biography written by his accomplished friend, Mr. Cecil. None of the Evangelical leaders passed through such an ordeal as he did; but the experience which he underwent as a slave-trader, and as the menial servant of a slave-trader, stood him in good stead after he had become an exemplary and respected clergyman. It enabled him to enter into and sympathise with the rude temptations of others; he had felt them all himself; he had yielded to them, and by the grace of God he had overcome them. The grossest of profligates found in him one who had sunk to a lower depth than themselves; and so they dared to unburthen their very hearts to him; and few who did so went away without relief. They would hardly have ventured to make so clean a breast before men who, like the majority of the Evangelical leaders, had always lived at least outwardly respectable lives; and if they had ventured to do so, these good men could hardly have appreciated their difficulties. But Newton had been one of them; scarcely a sin could they mention, but he had either committed it himself, or been brought into close contact with those who had *had* committed it. It was not so much as a preacher that Newton's forte lay; for though his sermons were full of matter and read well, it is said that they were not well delivered; and, perhaps, they are in themselves a little heavy, and deficient in the lighter graces of oratory. But as an adviser and personal director of those who had been heinous sinners, and had learnt to cry in the agony of

their souls, 'What must I do to be saved?' Newton was unrivalled.[1] Nor was it only to the profligate that Newton's advice was seasonable and effective. Many who were living outwardly decorous lives derived inestimable benefit from it. Thomas Scott, Joseph Milner, William Cowper, William Wilberforce, and Hannah More were all more or less influenced by him. Newton was in every way adapted to be a spiritual adviser. In spite of his rough exterior he was a man of very strong affections. This at his worst he never lost. In his darkest hours there was still one bright spot. His love for Mary Catlett, first conceived when she was a child of thirteen, continued unabated to the day of her death and beyond her death. This plain, downright, homely man not only professed but felt an ardour of attachment which no hero of romance ever exceeded. His conscience reproached him for making an idol of his 'dear Mary.' Oddly enough, he took the public into his confidence. The publication of his 'Letters to a Wife,' breathing as they do the very spirit of devoted love, in his own life-time, may have been in questionable taste; but they indicate a simplicity very characteristic of the man. His letters upon her death to Hannah More and others are singularly plaintive and beautiful; and the verses which he wrote year by year on each anniversary of that sad event are more touching than better poetry.[2]

It has been thought necessary to dwell upon these personal details because this most lovable of men has sometimes been strangely misrepresented as a spiritual despot, a harsh and injudicious adviser, and a narrow-minded bigot. The mental depression of the poet Cowper has been laid at his door. But when we look more closely into his relationship with that gifted but unhappy man, there appears to be no sufficient grounds for the charge. In the first place, the germs of that distressing melancholy which cast a gloom upon Cowper's later years are clearly traceable many years before his acquaintance with Newton began. The most that can be said is, that the depression to which he always had a predisposition may have been increased by his intimacy

[1] See, *inter alia*, *William Wilberforce, his Friends and his Times*, by J. C. Colquhoun, pp. 90, 98.

[2] See Newton's *Works*, in six volumes, edited by Cecil, *passim*.

with the pious and energetic Curate of Olney. But is there any real foundation for this supposition? To answer this question, it will be necessary to examine somewhat minutely the nature of the relationship which subsisted between Cowper and Newton. As both these good men were distinguished members of the Evangelical party, and contributed very materially in their different ways to the spread of the Evangelical revival, it will not, it is hoped, be thought too great a divergence from the main stream of our subject to do so.

Now at first sight it would seem difficult to conceive a greater contrast than that which existed between the two men. Cowper was a highly nervous, shy, delicate man, who was most at home in the company of ladies in their drawing-room, who had had no experience whatever of external hardships, who had always lived a simple, retired life, and had always shrunk with instinctive horror from the grosser vices. He was from his youth a refined and cultured scholar, and had associated with scarcely any but the pure and gentle. Newton was a plain, downright sailor, with nerves of iron, and a mind and spirit as robust as his frame. He had little inclination for the minor elegances of life. He was almost entirely self-taught. What could there be in common between two such men?

In point of fact, these differences were all merely superficial. Penetrate a little deeper, and it will be found that in reality they were thoroughly kindred spirits. On the one side, Cowper's apparent effeminacy was all on the surface; his mind, when it was not unstrung, was of an essentially masculine and vigorous type.[1] All his writings, including his delightful letters as well as his poetry, are remarkably free

[1] His appreciation of his old schoolfellow, Charles Churchill, who, whatever his faults may have been, was a thoroughly manly writer, is an illustration of this. On Churchill's premature death in 1786, Cowper wrote a striking letter to Mrs. Unwin, in which he showed how well he could appreciate the unhappy poet's merits; he ends with the apposite quotation of Virgil's beautiful lines, 'Ostendent terris hunc tantum fata,' &c. And in his *Table Talk* he pays a touching tribute to his brother-poet—

> 'Contemporaries all surpass'd, see one
> Short his career indeed, but ably run;
> Churchill, himself unconscious of his powers,
> In penury consum'd his idle hours.'

from mawkishness and mere sentimentality. On the other side, Newton's roughness was merely superficial. Within that hard exterior there beat a heart as tender and delicate as that of any child. It is the greatest mistake in the world to confound this genial, sociable man, full of quiet, racy humour, smoking that memorable pipe of his, which was the occasion of so much harmless fun between him and Cowper and the worthy sisters More—with the hard surly Puritan of the Balfour of Burley type. Newton had a point of contact with every side of Cowper's character. He had at least as strong a sympathy with the author of 'John Gilpin' as with the author of 'The Task.' For one of the most marked features of John Newton's intellectual character was his strong sense of humour. Many of his 'Ana' rival those of Dr. Johnson himself; and now and then, even in his sermons, glimpses of his humourous tendency peep forth.[1] But his wit never degenerated into buffoonery, and was never unseasonable like that of Berridge and Grimshaw. Again, he could fully appreciate Cowper's taste for classical literature; considering how utterly Newton's education had been neglected, it is perfectly marvellous how he managed, under the most unfavourable circumstances, to acquire no contemptible knowledge of the great classical authors. Add to all this that Newton's native kindness of heart made him feel very deeply for the misfortune of his friend, and it will be no longer a matter of wonder that there should have been so close a friendship between the two men. It is readily granted that there was a certain amount of awe mingled with the love which Cowper bore to Newton, but Newton was the very last man in the world to abuse the gentle poet's confidence.

But it will be worth while to examine seriatim the various counts of the indictment which has been brought against Newton for his dealings with Cowper.

1. It is argued that as Newton was a Calvinist, and as Cowper's mental depression was aggravated if not actually occasioned by his Calvinistic views, it follows that the clergyman's

[1] See especially his fourth sermon on 'The Messiah' in the series suggested by Handel's Oratorio. There is not a taint of irreverence, but no one but a man who had an exquisite sense of humour could have written the first two pages of that sermon.

influence over the poet must in this regard have been injurious. On this argument two remarks must be made. In the first place, let us not be misled by terms. There are Calvinists *and* Calvinists. Newton was only a Calvinist in the very modified sense in which, as we have seen, the later Evangelical School adopted that system. He had never 'swallowed John Calvin whole at a mouthful.' The gloomy, repulsive side of Calvinism found no place in Newton's system, at least it was never prominently put forward. But again, is it so absolutely certain that it was his Calvinism which depressed the poet? One can well understand how the dwelling upon the awful doctrine of reprobation might easily unhinge a mind predisposed to insanity. But as a matter of fact, was this the case with Cowper? Surely not. He never regarded himself as one of those predestined to eternal damnation, do what they would. On the contrary, he always held that he had once been a child of God;[1] it would have been well for him if he *had* applied the Calvinistic doctrine of final perseverance to himself. But he looked upon his own as an entirely exceptional case, quite outside of any theological system whatever. To follow all the aberrations of a disordered intellect is of course impossible; but it is quite clear that the dreadful hallucination which possessed Cowper's mind had nothing to do with any of the five points of Calvinism. He thought that he had committed the unpardonable sin because he had not yielded to an impulse he once felt to destroy himself. No *perversion* even of Calvinism could have suggested this to him. It is needless to attempt any explanation of the sad story; it need not have been noticed at all had it not been deemed necessary to acquit a

[1] See his touching hymn, 'O for a closer walk with God.'

'Where is the blessedness I knew
When first I saw the Lord?
Where is the soul-refreshing view
Of Jesus and his word?
What peaceful hours I once enjoyed!
How sweet their memory still!
But they have left an aching void
The world can never fill.
Return, O holy Dove, return,' &c.

That these lines express the poet's own experience is obvious from his letters, &c., describing his state.

good man from a charge of which he was quite guiltless. From whatever source Cowper may have derived his sad delusion, he certainly did not derive it, or receive any encouragement in it, from anything which Newton taught him, either from the pulpit or elsewhere.

2. 'But Newton was injudicious in his treatment of his gifted but afflicted friend. He persuaded him to write hymns and to visit the poor in his parish, when he should have encouraged him to undertake some more cheerful employment.' What evidence is there to show that either his hymn-writing or his parish work in any way tended to induce a return of Cowper's malady? Newton may well have thought that the consciousness of being usefully employed was the very best means of diverting Cowper's mind from the gloomy thoughts in which a want of occupation would have given him leisure to indulge. Nor should it be forgotten that the poet's last and worst attack took place long after he had given up such employments, and indeed long after he had ceased to be under Newton's influence at all.

3. Newton has been charged with narrow-mindedness on account of his disapproval of Cowper's translation of Homer, and of his proposed edition of Milton. But surely Newton's own account of the cause of his disapproval is a very reasonable one. He thought that one who, like Cowper, was gifted with an original genius was capable of better things than merely reproducing another man's thoughts.

4. Newton has been accused of 'unwarrantable interference,' of 'showing a spirit so intolerant and inquisitorial that it might have been considered harsh and unbecoming in a father confessor,' 'of acting while at Olney as the spiritual director of Cowper and Mrs. Unwin, and when he left considering it a trespass if they moved out of the narrow circle within which he circumscribed them.'[1] All this harsh language is used simply because Newton wrote to Cowper and Mrs. Unwin to inquire into the truth of a report which he had heard, of their entering into worldly society. Now considering the intimacy which had so long subsisted between Newton and Cowper, there is surely nothing very extraordinary in the conduct of the former, nothing at least deserving of the

[1] Southey's *Life of Cowper*, ii. 255.

severe strictures which have been applied to him. Cowper himself took the letters as they were meant. They did not in the least interfere with his respect and love for Newton. If there was fault anywhere, it lay with the meddlesome busybodies who were Newton's informants. The whole tenor of the good man's life contradicts the notion that he in any way desired to lord it over God's heritage in the houses at Olney and Weston Underwood. His character was as taking as it was striking; his life after his conversion was as pure and blameless as in earlier years it was the reverse. In the roll of worthies which the Evangelical revival produced in the last century, few are more interesting, few more worthy of our love and respect than John Newton.

The part which *William Cowper* (1731–1800) took in the Evangelical movement is too important to pass unnoticed. The shy recluse of Olney and Weston Underwood contributed in his way more towards the spread of the Evangelical revival than even Whitefield did with all his burning eloquence, or Wesley with all his indomitable activity. For those who despised Whitefield and Wesley as mere vulgar fanatics, those who would never have read a word of what Newton or Romaine wrote, those who were too much prejudiced to be affected by the preaching of any of the Evangelical clergy, could not refrain from reading the works of one who was without question the first poet of his day. This is not the place to criticise Cowper's poetry; but it may be remarked that that poetry exercised an influence greater than that which its intrinsic merits—great though these were—could have commanded, owing to the fact that Cowper was the first who gave expression to the reaction which had set in against the artificial school of Pope. Men were becoming weary of the smooth rhymes, the brilliant antitheses, the flash and the glitter, the constant straining after effect, carrying with it a certain air of unreality, which had long been in vogue. They welcomed with delight a poet who wrote in a more easy and natural, if a rougher and less correct style. Cowper was, in fact, the father of a new school of poetry—a school of which Southey, and Coleridge, and Wordsworth were in the next generation distinguished representatives. But almost all that Cowper wrote (at least of original com-

position) was subservient to one great end. He was essentially a Christian poet, and in a different sense from that in which Milton, and George Herbert, and Young were Christian poets. As Socrates brought philosophy, so Cowper brought religious poetry down from the clouds to dwell among men. Not only does a vein of piety run through all his poetry, but the attentive reader cannot fail to perceive that his main object in writing was to recommend practical, experimental religion of the Evangelical type. He himself gives us the keynote to all his writings in a beautiful passage,[1] in which he describes the want which he strove to supply.

> Pity, religion has so seldom found
> A skilful guide into poetic ground!
> The flowers would spring where'er she deigned to stray,
> And every muse attend her in her way.
> Virtue, indeed, meets many a rhyming friend,
> And many a compliment politely penned;
> But unattired in that becoming vest
> Religion weaves for her, and half undressed,
> Stands in the desert, shivering and forlorn,
> A wintry figure, like a withered thorn.

But while he never loses sight of his grand object, Cowper's poems are not mere sermons in verse. He not only passes without an effort 'from grave to gay, from lively to severe,' but he blends them together with most happy effect. Gifted with a rare sense of humour, with exquisite taste, and with a true appreciation of the beautiful both in nature and art, he enlists all these in the service of religion. While the reader is amused with his wit and charmed with his descriptions, he is instructed, proselytised—won over to Evangelicalism almost without knowing it. 'My sole drift,' wrote Cowper in 1781, a little before the publication of his first volume,[2] 'is to be useful; a point at which, however, I know I should in vain aim, unless I could be likewise entertaining. I have, therefore, fixed these two strings to my bow; and by the help of both have done my best to send my arrow to the mark. My readers will hardly have begun to laugh before they will be called upon to correct that levity and peruse me with a more serious air. I cast a sidelong glance at the good-liking of

[1] See Taylor's *Life of Cowper*, p. 426. [2] Id. p. 139.

the world at large, more for the sake of their advantage and instruction than their praise. They are children; if we give them physic we must sweeten the rim of the cup with honey,' &c. To this principle he faithfully adhered in all his original poems. He felt the difficulty of the task which he had proposed to himself. He knew that he would have to break through a thick, hard crust of prejudice before he could reach his readers' hearts. He saw the necessity of peculiar delicacy of treatment, lest he should repel those whom he desired to attract. And nothing marks more strongly the high estimate which Cowper formed of Newton's tact and good judgment than the fact that the poet asked his friend to write the preface to his first volume. When he made this request he was fully aware that any injudiciousness, any want of tact, would be fatal to his object. But he applied to Newton expressly because he thought him the only friend who would not betray him by any such mistakes. His own words are worth quoting:[1]—'With respect to the poem called "Truth," it is so true that it can hardly fail of giving offence to an unenlightened reader. I think, therefore, that in order to obviate in some measure those prejudices that will naturally erect their bristles against it, an explanatory preface, such as you (and nobody else so well as you) can furnish me with, will have every grace of propriety to recommend it; or if you are not averse to the task, and your avocations will allow you to undertake it, and if you think it will be still more proper, I should be glad to be indebted to you for a preface to the whole. I admit that it will require much delicacy, but am far from apprehending that you will find it difficult to succeed. You can draw a hair-stroke when another man would make a blot as broad as a sixpence.'

It is from the nature of the case difficult to estimate the services which Cowper's poetry rendered to the cause which lay nearest to the poet's heart. Poems do not make converts in the sense that sermons do; nevertheless, it is doing no injustice to the preaching power of the Evangelical school—strong as it unquestionably was, far stronger than their writings—to assert that Cowper's poetry left a deeper mark upon the Church than any sermons did. Through this

[1] Taylor's *Life*, p. 146.

means Evangelical theology in its most attractive form gained access into quarters into which no Evangelical preachers could ever have penetrated. The bitterest enemy of Evangelicalism who read Cowper's poems could not deny that here was at least one man, a scholar and a gentleman, with a refined and cultured mind and a brilliant wit, who was not only favourably disposed to the obnoxious doctrines, but held them to be the very life and soul of Christianity. Of course, to those who wished to find it, there was the ready answer that the man was a madman. But the mind which produced 'The Task' was certainly not unsound, at least at the time when it conceived and executed that fine poem. Every reader of discernment, though he might not agree with the religious views expressed in it, was obliged to confess that the author's powers were of the first order; and if William Cowper did no other service to the Evangelical cause, this alone was an inestimable one—that he convinced the world that the Evangelical system was not incompatible with true genius, ripe scholarship, sparkling wit, and a refined and cultivated taste.

If pilgrimages formed part of the Evangelical course, the little town or large village of Olney should have attracted as many pilgrims as S. Thomas' shrine at Canterbury did five centuries before. For with this dull, uninteresting spot are connected the names not only of Newton, and Cowper, and Mrs. Unwin, but also those of two successive vicars, Mr. Moses Brown and Mr. Bean, both worthy specimens of Evangelicals, and last, but by no means least, the name of Scott, the commentator.

Thomas Scott ($174\frac{6}{7}$—1821) was the spiritual son of Newton, and succeeded him in the curacy of Olney. There was a curious family likeness between the two men. Both were somewhat rough diamonds. The metal in both cases was thoroughly genuine; but perhaps Newton took polish a little more easily than Scott. Both were self-taught men, and compensated for the lack of early education by extraordinary application. Although Scott did not pass through so terrible an ordeal as Newton, still he had a sufficiently large experience, both of the moral evils and outward hard-

ships of life, to give him a very wide sympathy. Both were distinguished for a plain, downright, manly independence, both of thought and life; both were thoroughly unselfish and disinterested; both held a guarded Calvinism without the slightest tincture of Antinomianism; both lived, after their conversion, singularly pure and blameless lives; both struggled gallantly against the pressure of poverty, though Scott was the more severely tried of the two. As a writer, perhaps Scott was the more powerful; Newton wrote nothing equal to the 'Commentary' or the 'Force of Truth;' on the other hand, there was a tenderness, a geniality, and, above all, a very strong sense of humour in Newton which were wanting in Scott. Scott had not the popular qualities of Newton, a deficiency of which he was himself fully conscious; but he was a noble specimen of a Christian, and deserved a much wider recognition than he ever received in this world. The 'Force of Truth' is one of the most striking treatises ever published by the Evangelical school, though we cannot go quite so far as to say, with Bishop Wilson, of Calcutta, that it is equal to the 'Confessions of Augustine.' It is simply a frank and artless but very forcible account of the various stages in the writer's mental and spiritual career, through which he was led to the adoption of that moderate Calvinism in which he found a permanent home. The treatise is specially interesting, because it contains the history of a spiritual progress through which, in all probability, many (*mutatis mutandis*) passed in the eighteenth century. During the earlier years of his ministerial career Scott wavered between Socinianism and Arianism, and he showed the same conscientious disinterestedness, which distinguished him through life, by sacrificing his chance of preferment, at a time when his circumstances sorely needed it, because he could not with a clear conscience sign those articles which plainly declared the doctrine of the Trinity. Slowly and laboriously, and without help from any living man, except perhaps Newton, whose share in the matter will be noticed presently, Scott worked his way from point to point until he was finally established in the Evangelical faith. Burnet's 'Pastoral Care,' Hooker's 'Discourse on Justification,' Beveridge's 'Sermons,' Law's 'Serious Call' (of course), Venn's

'Essay on the Prophecy of Zacharias,' Hervey's 'Theron and Aspasio,' and De Witsius' 'Two Covenants,' contributed each its share towards the formation of his opinions. He describes with the utmost candour his obstinacy, his prejudices, and his self-sufficiency. Even while he was adopting one by one the obnoxious doctrines, he made amends by sneering at and publicly abusing the Methodists for holding those remaining doctrines which he still denied, till at last he became in all points a consistent Calvinistic Methodist (so called).[1] The 'Force of Truth' enables us to estimate at their proper value the judiciousness, forbearance, and gentleness of Newton. Scott tells us that he had heard of Newton 'as a benevolent, disinterested, inoffensive person, and a laborious minister.' 'But,' he adds, 'I looked upon his religious sentiments as rank fanaticism, and entertained a very contemptible opinion of his abilities, natural and acquired.' He heard him preach, and 'made a jest of his sermon;' he read one of his publications, and thought the greater part of it whimsical, paradoxical, and unintelligible. He entered into correspondence with him, hoping to draw him into controversy. 'The event,' he says, 'by no means answered my expectations. He returned a very friendly and long answer to my letter, in which he carefully avoided the mention of those doctrines which he knew would offend me. He declared that he believed me to be one who feared God and was under the teaching of his Holy Spirit; that he gladly accepted my offer of friendship, and was no ways inclined to dictate to me.' In this spirit the correspondence continued. 'I held my purpose,' writes Scott, 'and he his. I made use of every endeavour to draw him into controversy, and filled my letters with definitions, enquiries, arguments, objections, and consequences, requiring explicit answers. He, on the other hand, shunned everything controversial as much as possible, and filled his letters with the most useful and least offensive instructions.' The letters to 'the Rev. T. S.' in Newton's correspondence fully bear out all that Scott here relates; and one scarcely knows which to admire most, the truly Christian forbearance of the older man, or the truly Christian avowal of his faults by the

[1] Not, of course, a 'Methodist' as distinguished from an 'Evangelical,' but, according to the indiscriminate use of the term common in his day.

younger. The whole of Newton's subsequent intercourse with his spiritual son and successor at Olney indicates the same Christian and considerate spirit. How gently and wisely, and with what a quaint humour, the outgoing warns the incoming tenant of the study at Olney Vicarage! 'Methinks I see you sitting in my old corner in the study. I will warn you of one thing. That room (do not start) used to be haunted. I cannot say I ever saw or heard anything with my bodily organs, but I have been sure there were evil spirits in it and very near me—a spirit of folly, a spirit of indolence, a spirit of unbelief, and many others—indeed their name is Legion. But why should I say they are in your study when they followed me to London and still pester me here?' &c.[1] Newton had, on the whole, been very popular at Olney. Scott was unpopular. There are few more delicate relationships than that of a popular clergyman to his unpopular successor, especially when the former still keeps up an intimate connection with his quondam parishioners. Such was the relationship between Newton and Scott; and Newton showed rare tact and true Christian courtesy under the delicate circumstances. Cowper was, perhaps, not likely to welcome very warmly any successor to his beloved Newton. At any rate, he appears never to have cordially appreciated Scott. Scott complains, not without reason, of the poet charging him with *scolding* the people at Olney, when neither he nor Mrs. Unwin, nor their more respectable friends, had ever heard him preach.[2] Still the coldness between the poet and the new curate could hardly have been so great as Southey represents it, for Scott tells us that 'The Force of Truth' was revised by Mr. Cowper, and as to style and externals considerably improved by his advice.[3] But Southey's prejudices against the Evangelicals were even stronger than against the Methodists, and these prejudices reach a climax when he alludes to Scott. 'Cowper,' he writes, 'seems to have taken little pleasure in conversing with Mr. Newton's immediate successor in the curacy of Olney; it was, therefore, no loss to him when Mr. Scott was removed to the chaplaincy of the Lock Hospital, which in those days was a post of honour for preachers of his description. The living of Olney

[1] *Life of Scott*, 185. [2] *Life*, 216. [3] *Life*, 127.

was given to Mr. Bean, who, *with more ability than Mr. Scott*, and more discretion than Mr. Newton, was not inferior in piety to either.'[1] Mr. Bean was a worthy man. Scott himself describes him as 'useful and very acceptable to my friends and favourers;'[2] he may also, for anything we know to the contrary, have been an able man, but the description of him as superior in ability to the author of the "Commentary on the Bible" and the "Force of Truth"—a description, be it observed, given long after those works had become universally famous—really needs no comment.

Though Scott was unpopular at Olney, it must not be supposed that the fault was altogether his. Possibly he may not have had the elements in his character which, under any circumstances, could have made him popular. Indeed, he frankly owns that he had not. 'Some things,' he writes, 'requisite for popularity, I would not have if I could, and others I could not have if I would.'[3] But at Olney his unpopularity redounded to his credit. No man could have done his duty there without being unpopular. The evils against which Scott had to contend were of a more subtle and complicated kind than simple irreligion and immorality. Spiritual pride, and the combination of a high profession with a low practice, were the dominant sins of the place. His own description of the parish is quite what one might have expected from the scattered notices of it in the writings of Newton and Cowper. 'There are above 2,000 inhabitants in this town, almost all Calvinists, even the most debauched of them, the Gospel having been preached among them for a number of years by a variety of preachers, statedly and occasionally, sound and unsound, in church and meeting. The inhabitants are become like David, wiser than their teachers; that is, they think themselves so, and in an awful manner have learned to abuse Gospel notions to stupefy their consciences, vindicate their sloth and wickedness, and shield off conviction.'[4] Newton himself had been sorely hampered and troubled by the prevalence of this spirit at Olney, though he was by temperament better fitted to deal with such cases than Scott was.

[1] Southey's *Life of Cowper*, ii. 290.
[2] *Life of Scott*, 223.
[3] *Life*, 261.
[4] Id. 207, 208.

Scott's warfare against the perversions of Calvinism form a conspicuous feature in his ministerial career. On his removal to the chaplaincy of the Lock Hospital in London, he met with the same troubles as at Olney, on a larger scale, and in an aggravated form. 'Everything,' he writes, 'conduced to render me more and more unpopular, not only at the Lock, but in every part of London . . . . but my most distinguishing reprehensions of those who perverted the doctrines of the Gospel to Antinomian purposes, and my most awful warnings, were the language of compassionate love, and were accompanied by many tears and prayers.'[1] His printed sermons show us how strongly he felt the necessity of making a bold stand against the pernicious principles of some of the 'professors' who attended his ministry. It required far greater moral courage to wage such a warfare as this than to fight against open sin and avowed infidelity. And when it is also remembered that Scott was a needy man, and that his bread depended upon his keeping on good terms with his congregation, and, moreover, that he had to fight the battle alone, for he was too much identified with the 'Methodists' to receive any help from the 'Orthodox,' his difficult position will be understood. But the brave man cared little for obloquy or desertion, or even the prospect of absolute starvation, when the cause of practical religion was at stake. There is very little doubt that it was. Many who called themselves Calvinists were making the doctrines of grace a cloke for the vilest hypocrisy; and the noble stand which Scott made against these deadly errors gives him a better claim to the title of 'Confessor' than many to whom the name has been given.

In spite of opposition, the good man worked on with very small remuneration. His professional income (and he had little or nothing else) hardly exceeded 100*l.* a year. For this miserable stipend he officiated four times every Sunday in two churches, between which he had to walk fourteen miles, and ministered daily to a most disheartening class of patients in a hospital. To eke out his narrow income he undertook to write annotations on the Scriptures, which were to come out weekly, and to be completed in a hundred

[1] *Life*, 238.

numbers. The payment stipulated was the magnificent sum of a guinea a number! This was the origin of the famous Commentary. There is no need to make many remarks on this well-known work. As a practical and devotional commentary, it did not perhaps attain to the permanent popularity of Matthew Henry's commentary, and in point of erudition and acuteness it is not equal to that of Adam Clarke. But it holds an important place of its own in the Evangelical literature of its class, and its usefulness extended beyond the limits of the Evangelical school. Its immediate success was enormous, perhaps almost unparalleled in literary history, or at least in the history of works of similar magnitude; 12,000 copies of the English edition, and 25,250 of the American, were produced in the lifetime of the author. The retail price of the English copies amounted to 67,600*l.*, and of the American 132,300*l.* One would have been glad to learn that the author himself was placed in easy circumstances by the sale of his work. But this was not the case; on the contrary, it involved him for some time in very serious embarrassments. Scott died, as he lived, a poor man. But one is thankful to know that his old age was passed in comparative peace. His change from London to Aston Sandford, if it was not a remunerative, was at least a refreshing change. In the pure air of his country living he was liberated from the unsatisfactory wranglings, the bitter jealousies, and vexatious interference of his London patrons, whose self-sufficiency and spiritual pride were, like those of many amateur theologians at the present day, in inverse ratio to their knowledge and ability. He had the satisfaction of seeing a son grow up to be worthy of his father. To that son we are indebted for the very interesting biography of Thomas Scott, a biography in which filial piety has not tempted the writer to lose sight of good sense and honesty, and which is therefore not a mere panegyric, but a true and vivid account of its subject.

From Newton and Scott we naturally turn to one who was the friend of both and the biographer of the former.

Richard Cecil (1748–1810) differed widely in point of natural character from his two friends. He was perhaps the most cultured and refined of all the Evangelical leaders. Nature

had endowed him with an elegant mind, and he improved his natural gifts by steady application. He was not trained in the school of outward adversity as Newton and Scott had been; but he had trials of his own, mostly of an intellectual character, which were sharp enough. His delicate health prevented him from taking so busy a part as his friends did in the Evangelical movement. But in a different way he contributed in no slight degree to its success. There was a stately dignity, both in his character and in his style of writing, which was very impressive. His 'Remains' show traces of a scholarly habit of mind, a sense of humour, a grasp of leading principles, a liberality of thought, and capacity of appreciating good wherever it might be found, which render them, short though they are, a valuable contribution to Evangelical literature. A few passages may be quoted to illustrate these points.[1] The following, for instance, may be commended to the attention of those who persist in confounding Evangelicalism with Puritanism. 'The Papists and Puritans erred in opposite extremes in their treatment of mankind. The Papists, almost to a man, consider the mass of men as mere animals, and to be led by the senses. Even Fénelon fell into this way of thinking. Some few fine spirits were to be found which were capable of other treatment, but the herd they thought capable of nothing but seeing and hearing. The Puritans, on the contrary, treated man as though he had nothing of the animal about him. There was among them a total excision of all amusement and recreation. Everything was effort. Everything was severe. I have heard a man of this school preach on the distinction between justifying and saving faith. He tried to make his hearers enter into these niceties, whereas faith in its bold and leading features should have been presented to them if any effect was expected. The bulk of mankind are capable of much more than the Papist allows, but are incapable of that which the Puritan supposes. They should be treated in opposition to both, as rational and feeling creatures, but upon a bold and palpable ground.' In the following, Cecil shows himself to be not only in advance of his school, but of the Church

[1] 'Remains of the Rev. R. Cecil,' arranged by Josiah Pratt, *passim*, and especially pp. 31, 41, 60, 69, 107, 144, 153, 159, 168, 169, 208.

generally in the eighteenth century, in his view of Romanism. 'Man is a creature of extremes. The middle path is generally the wise path, but there are few wise enough to find it. Because Papists have made too much of some things, Protestants have made too little of them. Papists treat man as all sense, therefore some Protestants would treat him as all spirit. Because one party has exalted the Virgin Mary as a divinity, the other can hardly think of that most highly favoured among women with common respect. The Papist puts the Apocrypha into his canon. The Protestant will scarcely regard it as an ancient record. The Popish heresy of human merit in justification drove Luther on the other side into most unwarrantable and unscriptural statements of that doctrine. Papists consider grace as inseparable from the participation of sacraments. Protestants too often lose sight of them as instituted means of conveying grace.' How wise and timely were the following remarks on points connected with the Calvinistic controversy:—'Instead of attempting any logical and metaphysical explanation of justification by the imputed righteousness of Christ, all which attempts have human infirmity stamped upon them, I would look at the subject in the great and impressive light in which Scripture places it before me. . . . The thing is declared, not explained. Let us not, therefore, darken a subject which is held forth in a prominent light by our idle endeavours to make it better understood.' Cecil took a very high view of the ministerial office. 'I never,' he said, 'choose to forget that I am a priest, because I would not deprive myself of the right to dictate in my ministerial capacity. I cannot allow a man, therefore, to come to me merely as a friend on his spiritual affairs, because I should have no authority to say to him, "Sir, you must do so and so." I cannot suffer my best friends to dictate to me in anything which concerns my ministerial duties. I have often had to encounter this spirit, and there would be no end of it if I did not check and resist it. I plainly tell them that they know nothing of the matter.' Such plain speaking was and still is much needed. As Rowland Hill said, there is a worse thing than a priest-ridden people, and that is a people-ridden priest.

There are yet two names among the clerical leaders of

the Evangelical party in the last century which were at least as influential as any which have been mentioned. The two brothers, Joseph and Isaac Milner, were both in their different ways very notable men.

Joseph Milner, the elder brother (1744–1797), lived a singularly uneventful life. After having taken a good degree at Cambridge, he was appointed, at a very early age, head-master of the grammar school at Hull, in which town he spent the remainder of his comparatively short life. He was in course of time made Vicar of North Ferriby, a village near Hull; and, first, lecturer, and then, only a few weeks before his death, Vicar, of Holy Trinity, the parish church of Hull. Both his scholastic and ministerial careers were successful and useful, but do not call for any particular notice. His Calvinistic views rendered him for a time unpopular, but he outlived his unpopularity, and died at the age of fifty-three, generally respected as he deserved to be.

But it is as a writer that Joseph Milner claims our chief regard. His 'Church History' may contend with Scott's 'Commentary,' for the first place among the Evangelical literature of the last century. The plan of this important work was a happy and an original one—original, that is, so far as execution was concerned; for the first idea was not original—it was suggested by a fragment written by Newton at Olney. Having observed with regret that most Church histories dwelt mainly, if not exclusively, upon the disputes of Christians, upon the various heresies and schisms which in all ages have distracted the Christian Church, Milner felt that they were calculated to impress their readers with a very unfavourable view of the Christian religion, as if the chief result of that religion had been to set men at variance with one another.[1] Mosheim, the fullest historian of the Church in that day, seemed to Milner a notable offender in this respect. Milner therefore purposed to write a 'History of the Church of Christ,' the main object of which should be to set forth the blessed effects which Christianity had produced in all, even the darkest ages, and which should touch but slightly

[1] See Milner's *History of the Church of Christ* (new ed. four vols., Cadell, 1834), *passim*, and especially Introduction, and vol. i. 110, 131, 136, 137, 156; ii. 415; iii. 73.

and incidentally, and only so far as the subject absolutely required it, upon the heresies and disputes which formed the staple of most Church histories. He argues very justly, 'The terms "Church" and "Christian" in their natural sense respect only good men. Such a succession of pious men in all ages existed, and it will be no contemptible use of such a history as this, if it prove that in every age there have been *real* followers of Christ. To see and trace the goodness of God in every age will be to the devout mind a refreshment of the most grateful nature.' His history, in fact, was to be a history of *real* not *nominal* Christians. He thought that too much had been said about ecclesiastical wickedness, and that Deists and Sceptics had taken advantage of this against Christians. Such a work was a 'desideratum,' and had the execution been equal to the conception, it would have been simply invaluable. If genuine piety, thorough honesty, a real desire to recognise good wherever it could be found, and a vast amount of information, in the amassing of which he was aided by a wonderfully tenacious memory and great industry, were sufficient to insure success, Milner certainly possessed all these qualifications in an eminent degree. But in others, which are equally essential, he was deficient. In the first place, his work laboured under the fatal defect of dulness. Of all writers, perhaps the ecclesiastical historian has most need of a lively, racy style, of the art of selecting really prominent facts and representing them with vividness and picturesqueness. The nature of his subject is drier than that of the civil historian. He *must* write much which to the majority of readers will be heavy reading, unless they are carried along by the grace and attractiveness of the composition. Milner has not the art of setting off his characters in the most effective manner. There is a want of spring and dash about his style which has prevented many from doing justice to his real merits.

Then again, he was rather too much of a partisan, to make a good historian. With every wish to give honour where honour was due, his mind was not evenly balanced enough for his task. Holding, as Milner did, the very strongest and most uncompromising views of the utter depravity of mankind, he can allow no good at all in what are termed 'mere

moral virtues.' Indeed, he will hardly allow such virtues to be 'splendid sins.' He is far too honest to suppress facts, but his comments upon facts are often tinged with a quite unconscious unfairness. Thus, he admits the estimable qualities which Antoninus Pius possessed, but 'doubtless,' he adds, 'a more distinct and explicit detail of his life would lessen our admiration: something of the supercilious pride of the Grecian or of the ridiculous vain-glory of the Roman might appear.'[1]

A kindred but graver defect is Milner's incessant depreciation of all schools of philosophy. Instead of seeing in these great thinkers of antiquity a yearning after that light which Christianity gives, he can see in them nothing but the deadliest enmity to Christianity. 'The Church of Christ is abhorrent in its plan and spirit from the systems of proud philosophers.' 'Moral philosophy and metaphysics have ever been dangerous to religion. They have been found to militate against the vital truths of Christianity and corrupt the gospel in our times, as much as the cultivation of the more ancient philosophy corrupted it in early ages.' The minister of Christ is warned against 'deep researches into philosophy of any kind,' and much more to the same effect. It was this foolish manner of talking and writing which gave the impression that the religion which the Evangelicals recommended was a religion only fitted for persons of weak minds and imperfect education.[2] Such sweeping and indiscriminate censures of 'human learning' (at least of one important branch of it) not only encouraged contemptuous opinions of

[1] I. 156.—See also i. 131 &c.

[2] 'A cause,' writes Hannah More, 'which very much intimidates well-meaning people, is their terror lest the character of piety should derogate from their reputation as men of sense. Every man of the world naturally arrogates to himself the superiority of understanding over every religious man. He therefore who has been accustomed to set a high value on his intellectual powers must have made very considerable advance in piety before he can acquire a magnanimous indifference to this usurped superiority of another,' and much more to the same effect. See vol. xi. of Hannah More's *Works*, p. 42 &c. 'Thoughts on the Manners of the Great.' To the same effect in her 'Religion of the Fashionable World': 'It must be owing to a very fortunate combination of circumstances if a man can at once preserve the character of parts and piety, and retain the reputation of a man of sense after he has acquired that of a Christian.'—*Works*, vol. xi. p. 157.

Evangelicalism among its enemies, but also tended to make many of its friends think too lightly of those gifts which, after all, come as truly from 'the Father of Lights' as those which are more strictly termed spiritual. It was a very convenient doctrine for those who could certainly never have attained to any degree of intellectual eminence, to think that they were quite on a level with those who could and did: nay, that they had the advantage on their side, because intellectual eminence was a snare rather than a help to Christianity. It is all the more provoking to find such passages as those which have been quoted from Milner in Evangelical writings (and they are not uncommon), because the Evangelical leaders themselves were very far indeed from being deficient either in abilities or attainments. Perhaps none of them can be classed among the first order of divines; but those who assert that Wesley, Romaine, Newton, Scott, Cecil, and the Milners were fools and ignoramuses, only show their own folly and ignorance.

Another defect of Milner as a historian is, that he is rather too anxious 'to improve the occasion.' Whatever century he is treating of, he always seems to have one eye steadily fixed upon the latter part of the eighteenth century. He takes every possible and impossible opportunity of dealing a side-blow to the Arminians and Schismatics of his own day:[1] for Milner, though he was called a Methodist, was a most uncompromising stickler for every point of Church order.

His Calvinism led him to give undue prominence to those Christians of the past who held the same views. Thus, for instance, although the great Bishop of Hippo richly deserves all the honour which a Church historian can bestow upon him, yet surely he was not so immeasurably superior to the other fathers, that he should have 145 pages devoted to him, while Chrysostom has only sixteen and Jerome only eleven. But 'the peculiar work for which Augustine was evidently raised by Providence, was to restore the doctrines of divine grace to the Church.'

Having frankly owned these defects, we may now turn to the more pleasing task of recognising Milner's real merits.

Strong Protestant as Milner was, he showed a generous

[1] See i. 136, 137, 325, 457.

appreciation of the real good which existed in the Church of Rome: a most unusual liberality in theologians of the eighteenth century—High Church as well as Low. He warned his readers most seasonably, that they 'should not be prejudiced against the real Church, because she then [in the time of Gregory I.] wore a Roman garb,' for 'superstition to a certain degree may co-exist with the spirit of the Gospel.' And he certainly acted up to the spirit of his warning. Of course, his chief heroes are those who were more or less adverse to the claims of the Roman See, such as Grossteste, Bradwardine, Wickliff, and Jerome of Prague. But he can fully appreciate the merits of an Anselm, for instance, whose 'humble and penitent spirit consoles the soul with a glance of Christian faith in Christ;'[1] of Bernard, of whom he writes, 'There is not an essential doctrine of the Gospel which he did not embrace with zeal, defend by argument, and adorn by his life;'[2] of Bede, who 'alone knew more of true religion, both doctrinal and practical, than numbers of ecclesiastics put together at this day.' And he owns that 'our ancestors were undoubtedly much indebted, under God, to the Roman See.'[3]

The excellence of his plan, to which he faithfully adheres, might atone for more faults than Milner is guilty of. We may well bear with a few shortcomings in a Church history which, instead of perplexing the mind with the interminable disputes of professing Christians, makes it its main business to detect the spirit of Christ wherever it can be found. It is a real refreshment, no less than a real strengthening of our faith, to turn from Church histories which might be more correctly termed histories of the abuses and perversions of Christianity, to one which really is what it professes to be—a history of the good which Christianity has done.

Joseph Milner died when his history had only reached the middle of the thirteenth century; but his pen was taken up by a hand which was, at least, equally competent to wield it. The fourth volume of the history, carrying the work down to about the middle of the sixteenth century, was compiled by his younger brother Isaac, on whom we may now say a few words.

Isaac Milner (1751–1820) was the one solitary instance of

[1] II. 597 &c. [2] III. 73. [3] II. 441.

an avowed and uncompromising adherent of the Evangelical school, in the last century, attaining any high preferment in the Church. Indeed, his claims could not have been ignored without glaring injustice. He was the Senior Wrangler of his year, and First Smith's Prizeman, and the epithet 'incomparabilis' was attached to his name in the Mathematical Tripos. He continued to reside at the University after he had taken his degree, and was appointed Professor of Mathematics, President of his college (Queen's), and finally, Dean of Carlisle. Isaac Milner's services to the Evangelical cause were invaluable. Holding a prominent position at Cambridge, he was able to establish a sort of School of the Prophets, where Evangelical ministers in embryo were trained in the system of their party. But, besides this, he helped the cause he had at heart by becoming a sort of general adviser and referee in cases of difficulty. For such an office he was admirably adapted. His reputation for erudition, and his high standing at Cambridge, commanded respect; and his sound, shrewd sense, his thorough straightforwardness and hatred of all cant and unreality, his genial manner and his decidedness, made his advice very effective. He acquired a reputation for conversational powers not much inferior in his own circle to that of Dr. Johnson in his; and this, no doubt, added to his influence.

There was only one man at Cambridge whose services to Evangelicalism at all equalled those of Isaac Milner. It need scarcely be said that that man was Charles Simeon, the voluntary performer of that work for which, of all others, our universities ought most carefully to provide, but which, at least during the eighteenth century, they most neglected—the training of our future clergymen. As Simeon's work, however, is more connected with the nineteenth than with the eighteenth century, it need not further be referred to.

It is difficult to know where to draw the line, in noticing the clerical leaders of the Evangelical party. If all the worthy men who helped on the cause were here commemorated, this chapter would swell into outrageous dimensions. Dr. Conyers of Helmsley, and subsequently of Deptford, the friend and brother-in-law of J. Thornton; Mr. Richardson of York, the intimate friend of Joseph Milner and the editor of

his sermons; Mr. Stillingfleet of Hotham, another friend of Milner's; Mr. Jowett, a voluminous and once much admired writer, would claim at least a passing notice. But there is one more Evangelical clergyman whose work must not be ignored.

Thomas Robinson of Leicester (1749–1813) was the friend of all the Evangelical leaders of his day. Having taken his degree with credit at Cambridge—he was said to be the best *general* scholar of his time—he served for a short while the curacy of Witcham, a village near Cambridge. Here he raised, by his reputed Methodism, a sensation which extended to the whole neighbourhood, and even to the University itself. 'His tutor and friend, Mr. Postlethwaite, hearing that he was bent on turning Methodist, from the kindest motives took him seriously to task, exhorting him to beware, to consider what mischief the Methodists were doing, and at what a vast rate they were increasing. "Sir," said Robinson, "what do you mean by a Methodist? Explain, and I will ingenuously tell you whether I am one or not." This caused a puzzle and a pause. At last Mr. Postlethwaite said, "Come then, I'll tell you. I hear that in the pulpit you impress on the minds of your hearers, that they are to attend to your doctrine from the consideration that you will have to give an account of them, and of your treatment of them, at the Day of Judgment." "I am surprised," rejoined Robinson, "to hear this objected. It is true." Robinson got no further explanation from the tutor, but that the increase of Methodism was an alarming thing.'[1] From Witcham, Robinson was removed to Leicester, where he spent the remainder of his life, and where he passed through very much the same sort of experience which attended most of the Evangelical clergy of the period: that is, his 'Methodistical' views raised great opposition at the outset; but he lived it down, became a very popular preacher, and took a leading part in every scheme for the amelioration of the temporal and spiritual condition of Leicester. Mr. Robinson was also well-known as an author. His 'Christian System' and 'Scripture Characters' were once much read

[1] See the *Life of the Rev. T. Robinson, Vicar of St. Mary's, Leicester, and sometime Fellow of Trin. Coll., Camb.*, by Rev. E. T. Vaughan, p. 50 &c.

and much admired books, especially the former, which is still found in most libraries of divinity collected in the early part of the present century.

It was said above that Dean Milner was the solitary instance of an Evangelical clergyman of the last century, who gained any high preferment. Some may think that Beilby Porteus, Bishop of London, also formed an exception to the rule. But, strictly speaking, Bishop Porteus can scarcely be said to have identified himself with the Evangelical school. It is true that he did not share the prejudices which many of his brother prelates conceived against the Evangelical clergy, but, on the contrary, was on terms of the closest intimacy with many of them, and always used the commanding influence which his position gave him in their favour. He threw himself heartily into all their philanthropical schemes—the promotion of Sunday-schools, the agitation for the abolition of negro slavery, and the newly reawakened zeal for foreign missions. But he never so far committed himself as to incur the reproach of Methodism; he did not bear the brunt of the battle as the Evangelicals did, and therefore can hardly be reckoned among their number.

Hitherto, our attention has been turned mainly to the *clergy* who took part in the Evangelical movement. But this sketch would be very imperfect if it failed to notice the eminent laymen who helped the cause. The two Thorntons, father and son, William Wilberforce, Lord Dartmouth, Lord Teignmouth and others, who regularly or occasionally attended the ministry of John Venn, the worthy Rector of Clapham, were called in derision, 'the Clapham sect.' The phrase implies a sort of reproach which was not deserved. These good men had no desire to form a sect. They were all, in their way, loyal sons of the Church of England, content with her liturgy, attached to her doctrines, and ready to conform to her order. Perhaps, like most laymen who take up strong views on theological subjects, they were inclined to be a little narrow. None of them had, or professed to have, the slightest pretensions to be called theologians. Still, they learned and practised thoroughly the true lessons of Christianity, and shed a lustre upon the Evangelical cause by the purity, disinterestedness, and beneficence of their lives.

Of the two Thorntons little need be said, except that they were wealthy merchants who in very truth looked upon their riches not as their own, but as talents entrusted to them for their Master's use. The princely liberality of these two good men was literally unbounded. It has been seen that the Evangelical clergy were almost to a man debarred from the emoluments of their profession, and lived in very straitened circumstances. The extent to which their lack was supplied by John and Henry Thornton is almost incredible. John Thornton regularly allowed Newton, during the sixteen years the latter was at Olney, 200*l.* a year for charitable purposes, and urged him to draw upon him for more when necessary. Henry Thornton, the son, is said to have divided his income into two parts, retaining only one-seventh for his own use, and devoting six-sevenths to charity; after he became the head of a family, he gave two-thirds away and retained one-third for himself and his family. It appeared after his death, from his accounts, that the amount he spent in the relief of distress in one of his earlier years considerably exceeded 9000*l.*

The character and career of *William Wilberforce* (1759-1831) are too well known to need description; it will be sufficient here to touch upon those points in which the great philanthropist was directly concerned in the Evangelical revival. Only it should be distinctly borne in mind that the main work of his life cannot be separated from his Evangelical principles. His earnest efforts in behalf of the negro were as plainly the result of Evangelicalism as was the munificence of the Thorntons or the preaching of Venn. When Wilberforce was first impressed seriously, and was in doubt what plan of life to adopt, he consulted, like many others, John Newton. He could not have had recourse to a better adviser. Newton counselled him not to give up his proper position in the world, but to seek in it opportunities for employing his wealth, talents, and influence for his Master's work. The wise old man saw that the young enthusiast could help the cause far more effectually as a member of Parliament and friend of the Minister, than ever he could have done as a parochial clergyman or as an itinerant.[1] Hence, Wilberforce,

[1] See *Wilberforce, His Friends and his Times*, by J. C. Colquhoun, p. 102.

instead of becoming a second Rowland Hill, as he might easily have been persuaded to do, became the staunch supporter of the Evangelical cause in Parliament, and the successful recommender of its principles in general society.

Evangelicalism had been gradually making its way upwards among the social strata. The earlier Methodism had been influential almost exclusively among the lower and lower middle classes. Good Lady Huntingdon's efforts are a proof, rather than an exception to the rule, that Methodism in this form was out of harmony with the tastes of the upper classes, and had little practical efficacy with them. But Evangelicalism was beginning to excite not a mere passing curiosity such as had been created by Whitefield's preaching, but a really practical interest among the aristocracy. No one contributed more largely to this result than William Wilberforce. Here was a man of rare social talents, a thorough gentleman, a brilliant orator, and an intimate friend of some of the most eminent men of the day, not only casting in his lot with the 'calumniated school' (as Hannah More calls it), but straining every nerve to recommend its principles. It has been said, indeed, that Wilberforce was not, properly speaking, an Evangelical.[1] This is so far true, that Wilberforce did not identify himself entirely with any religious party, and that he was, as Thomas Scott observes, 'rather afraid of Calvinism.' But it would be robbing Evangelicalism of its due, to deny that Wilberforce's deep religious convictions were solely derived (so far as human agency was concerned) from the Evangelical school. He was early impressed by the preaching, and perhaps the private counsel, of his schoolmaster, Joseph Milner. These impressions were afterwards revived and deepened by his intercourse with Isaac Milner, whom he accompanied on a continental tour just before the decisive change in his character. He was then led to consult John Newton, and was advised by him to attend the ministry of Thomas Scott at the Lock Hospital, from which he himself tells us that he derived great benefit; and he afterwards attended regularly the ministry of J. Venn. Surely these facts speak for themselves. The religious character of

[1] Sir James Stephen, *Essays in Ecclesiastical Biography*.

Wilberforce was moulded by the Evangelical clergy, and he was himself to all intents and purposes an Evangelical.

If further proof were needed, it would only be necessary to refer to Wilberforce's best known publication, entitled in full, 'A Practical View of the prevailing Religious System of Professed Christians in the Higher and Middle Classes in this country, contrasted with real Christianity.' No book, since the publication of the 'Serious Call,' had exerted so wide and deep an influence as the 'Practical View.' Wilberforce took up very much the same position as Law had done; and it would be difficult to award higher praise to the later work than to say, as one justly may, that it will bear comparison with the earlier. Not that as mere compositions the two works can for one moment be compared. In depth of thought, strength of argument, and beauty of language, Law's is immeasurably superior. But, on the other hand, Wilberforce had on many points a distinct advantage. To begin with, the mere fact that the 'Practical View' was written by a layman—and such a layman!—gave it a weight which no book of the kind written by a clergyman could possess.[1] The force of the latter might always be broken by the objection that the writer was swayed by professional bias, and that his arguments, whatever might be their intrinsic merits, must be taken *cum grano* by the lay mind. But besides this 'coign of vantage' from which Wilberforce wrote, there were also points in the books themselves in which, for the purposes for which they were written, the preference must be given to the later work. It was not unnaturally objected against Law, that he did not sufficiently base his arguments upon distinctly Gospel motives. No such objection can be raised against Wilberforce. Then again, though Wilberforce was a thoroughly unworldly man, he was in the good sense of the term a thorough man of the world, and knew by experience what course of argument would tell most with such men. What Law writes from mere theory, Wilberforce writes from prac-

[1] 'Mr. Wilberforce's "Practical View,"' writes Thomas Scott, 'is a most noble and manly stand for the Gospel; full of good sense and most useful observations on subjects quite out of our line, and in all respects fitted for usefulness; and coming from such a man, it will probably be read by many thousands who can by no means be brought to attend either to our preaching or writings, especially the rich.'—*Life of T. Scott*, 341.

tical knowledge. It would be difficult to conceive men of powerful intellect like Dr. Johnson and John Wesley, who had really thought deeply and seriously on such subjects, being so strongly affected by the 'Practical View' as these were by the 'Serious Call.' But men of powerful intellect who had thought deeply and seriously on religious subjects, were rare. The 'Practical View' is strong enough food for the general reader, while at the same time its unpretentious earnestness disarmed the criticism and won the hearts of men of genius like Edmund Burke. Wilberforce was no theologian; he was simply a good man who read his New Testament in a guileless spirit, and expostulated affectionately with those who, professing to take that book as their standard, were living lives plainly repugnant to its principles. The success of Wilberforce's attempt was as great as it was unexpected. The publisher had so poor an opinion of the project, that he would consent to issue five hundred copies only on condition that Wilberforce would give his name. But the first edition was sold off in a few days; within half-a-year the book had passed through five editions, and it has now passed through more than fifty. The rest of Wilberforce's useful life, extending as it did some way into the nineteenth century, does not fall within the scope of the present inquiry.

Among Evangelical laymen, Lord Dartmouth held an honoured place. He did good service to the cause by advocating its interests both among the nobility and at Court; he was one of the very few who had the opportunity and will to advance the Evangelical clergy; and among others, he had the honour of promoting John Newton to the rectory of S. Mary Woolnoth.[1] He himself was a standing witness that 'Methodism' was not a religion merely for the coarse and unrefined, for he was himself so polished a gentleman that Richardson is reputed to have said that 'he would have realised his own idea of Sir Charles Grandison, if he had not been a Methodist.' It was Lord Dartmouth of whom Cowper wrote, 'he wears a coronet and prays:' an implied reflection upon a large order, which the poet was scarcely justified in making.

[1] Newton's 'Letters to a Nobleman,' published in his works, were addressed to Lord Dartmouth.

Lord Teignmouth was another Evangelical nobleman; but, strictly speaking, he does not come within the range of our subject; for it was not until the nineteenth century had commenced that he settled at Clapham, and became a distinguished member of the so-called Clapham sect, and the first president of the newly-formed Bible Society.

Among Evangelical laymen are we to place the revered name of Samuel Johnson? His prejudices against Whitefield and the early Methodists have already been noticed; and the supposed antagonism between 'Methodism' and 'orthodoxy' would probably always have prevented one so intensely orthodox from fully identifying himself with the movement. But, without entering into the controversy which raged, so to speak, round the body of the good old man, there can be little doubt, that towards the close of his life he was largely influenced by the Evangelical doctrines. His well-known fear of death laid him open to the influence of those who had clearly learned to count the last enemy as a friend; and there is no reason to doubt the story of his last illness, which rests upon unimpeachable testimony. 'My dear doctor,' he said to Dr. Brocklesby, 'believe a dying man: there is no salvation but in the sacrifice of the Son of God.' 'I offer up my soul to the great and merciful God. I offer it full of pollution, but in full assurance that it will be cleansed in the blood of the Redeemer.'[1]

It will have been noticed that, with the exception of Lady Huntingdon, no female has been mentioned as having taken any prominent part in the Evangelical Revival. The mother of the Wesleys, Mrs. Fletcher, Mrs. Newton, Mrs. Cecil, and perhaps Mrs. C. Wesley, were all excellent specimens of Evangelical Christians; but their influence was exercised solely in private. Neither by writing nor in any other way

[1] See *Life and Correspondence of Mrs. Hannah More*, by W. Roberts, Esq., i. 395. The *Quarterly Review* vehemently combated the notion of Dr. Johnson's conversion. In reference to the passage in Roberts' *Life of H. More*, it said, 'This attempt to persuade us that Dr. Johnson's mind was not made up as to the great fundamental doctrine of the Christian religion, until it was enforced on him *in extremis* by sectarian or Methodistical zeal, cannot redound to the credit of Mr. Roberts' understanding,' &c. Those who care to enter into this bygone controversy may be referred to the *Christian Observer* for May 1843, pp. 281–287.

did they come prominently forward. This is all the more noteworthy, because, so far as the principles of Evangelicalism were concerned, there was no reason why there should not have been many Lady Huntingdons among the Evangelical leaders. That there were not, is perhaps owing to the fact that there was a certain robustness of character common to all the chiefs of the party. One can scarcely conceive Venn, or Newton,[1] or Scott, or the Milnĕrs being led by women. There is, however, one exception to the rule.

Hannah More (1745–1833), by her writings and by her practical work in a sphere where such work was sorely needed, won an honourable place among the Evangelical worthies. Her accomplishments and attainments, her ready wit and social talents, gave her a place in society higher than that to which her birth entitled her, long before she came under the influence of the Evangelical party. It was by slow degrees that she embraced one by one the peculiar tenets of that school.[2] Perhaps to the very end she never thoroughly identified herself with it, though her religious character was unquestionably formed under Evangelical influences. She formed a sort of link between Evangelicalism and the outer world. The intimate friend of David and Mrs. Garrick, of Dr. Johnson, of Horace Walpole, of Bishop Horne and Bishop Shute Barrington on the one hand, and of John Newton, Wilberforce, the two Thorntons and Bishop Porteus on the other, she had points of contact with people of very different ways of thinking. It was this wide sympathy which enabled her to gain the ear of the public. 'You have a great advantage,

[1] One of Newton's bon-mots was, 'The place of honour in an army is not with the baggage or among the women.'

[2] See one of Newton's characteristically tender and sympathetic letters in answer to Hannah More's description of her spiritual state: 'What you are pleased to say, my dear madam, of the state of your mind, I understand perfectly well; I praise God on your behalf, and I hope I shall earnestly pray for you. I have stood upon that ground myself. I see what you want, to set you quite at ease; and though *I* cannot give it you, I trust that He who has already taught you what to desire will in His own best time do everything for you and in you which is necessary to make you as happy as is compatible with our present state of infirmity and warfare; but He must be waited *on* and waited *for*, to do this. Hannah More had before this expressed her liking for Newton's 'Cardiphonia, though not for every sentiment or expression which it contains.' See Roberts' *Life*, i. 236.

madam,' wrote Newton to her; 'there is a circle by which what you write will be read; and which will hardly read anything of a religious kind that is not written by you.'[1] The popularity of her writings, which were very numerous, was extraordinary. Her 'Thoughts on the Manners of the Great' (1788) showed much moral courage. 'They were not,' writes her biographer, 'the animadversions of a recluse, but of one who was flattered, admired, and courted by the very people whose vices and follies she was about to reprove; and these, too, persons whom she was in the daily habit of meeting, and whose attentions were supposed to confer great distinction.'[2] It was published anonymously, not because she was afraid of being known as the author, but simply because 'she hoped it might be attributed to a better person, and so might produce a greater effect.' The secret of the authorship was, however, soon discovered, and the effect was not spoiled. To the credit also of the fashionable world, it must be added that her popularity was not diminished. The success of her effort exceeded her most sanguine expectation. Seven large editions were sold in a few months, the second in little more than a week, the third in four hours. Its influence was traceable in the abandonment of many of the customs which it attacked.[3] In 1790 a sort of sequel appeared, entitled 'An Estimate of the Religion of the Fashionable World,' which was bought up and read as eagerly as its predecessor. Nine years later another work on a kindred subject, entitled 'Strictures on Female Education,' was equally successful. Nor was it only on the subject of the higher classes that Hannah More was an effective writer. The wild license of the French Revolution, while it filled sober, respectable people with perhaps an extravagant alarm, seemed at one time not unlikely to spread its contagion among the disaffected classes in England. One result was, the dissemination among the multitude of cheap literature full of speculative infidelity, as well as of abuse of the constituted authorities in this country. To furnish an antidote, Hannah More published, in 1792, a popular work entitled 'Village Politics, by Will Chip,' the object of which

[1] Roberts, ii. 260. [2] Id. p. 95.
[3] See *Life of H. More*, by H. Thompson, p. 81.

was to check the spread of French revolutionary principles among the lower classes. So great was the effect of this work, that it was said by some, with a little exaggeration, no doubt, to have contributed essentially to prevent a revolution in England. Her success in this department of literature encouraged her to write a series of tracts which she published periodically, until 1798, under the title of the 'Cheap Repository Tracts.' Hannah More was well fitted for this latter work by her practical experience among the poor. Like most of the Evangelicals, she was a thorough worker. The spiritual destitution of Cheddar and the neighbourhood so affected her, that she formed the benevolent design of establishing schools for the children and religious instruction for the grown-up. Such efforts are happily so common at the present day, that it is difficult to realise the moral courage and self-denial which the carrying out of such a plan involved, or the difficulties with which the projector had to grapple. Some parents objected to their children attending the schools, lest Miss More should acquire legal control over them and sell them as slaves. Others would not allow the children to go unless they were paid for it. Of course, the cuckoo-cry of Methodism was raised. The farmers were bitterly opposed to the education of their labourers, and the clergy, though generally favourable, were not always so. But Miss More was not without friends. Her sister Patty was an invaluable assistant. Wilberforce and Thornton helped her with their purses. Newton, Bishop Porteus and other clergy strengthened her with their counsel and rendered her personal assistance; and at the close of the eighteenth century, the neighbourhood of Cowslip Green wore a very different aspect from what it had worn twenty years earlier.

If we were to judge of Hannah More's writings by their popularity, and the undoubted effects which they produced, or by the testimony which men of approved talents and discernment have borne to their value, we should place her in the very first rank of eighteenth century writers. 'Her style and manner are confessedly superior to those of any moral writer of the age.' She is 'one of the most illustrious females that ever was in the world.' 'One of the most truly Evangelical divines of this whole age, perhaps almost of any age

not apostolic.' Bishop Porteus actually recommended her writings both in a sermon and in a charge. A feeling of disappointment will probably be raised in most readers who turn from these extravagant eulogies to the works themselves. They are full of somewhat vapid truisms, and their style is too ornate for the present age. Like so many writers of her day, she wrote Johnsonese rather than English. She loved long words, and amplified where she should have compressed. However, it is an ungracious task to criticise one who did good work in her time. After all, the truest test of the merits of a writer who wrote with the single object that Hannah More did, is the effect she produced. Her writings were once readable and very influential. If the virtue now appears to have gone out of them, we may be thankful that it lasted so long as it was needed.

To conclude this long chapter. If any think that the picture here drawn of the leaders of the Evangelical Revival is too highly coloured, and that in this, as in all human efforts, frailties and mistakes might be discovered in abundance, the writer can only reply that he has not knowingly concealed any infirmities to which these good men were subject, though he frankly admits that he has touched upon them lightly and reluctantly. He feels that they were the salt of the earth in their day; that their disinterestedness, their moral courage in braving obloquy and unpopularity, their purity of life, the spirituality of their teaching, and the world of practical good they did among a neglected people, render them fully worthy of the name by which they have been called by one of their spiritual descendants: 'Mighty spiritual heroes.'[1] It would have been an ungracious task ruthlessly to lay bare and to descant upon their weaknesses. That was done mercilessly by their contemporaries and those of the next generation. There is more need now to redress the balance by giving due weight to their many excellences.

It seems all the more necessary to bring out into full prominence their claims upon the admiration of posterity, because they have scarcely done justice to themselves in the writings they have left behind them. They were not, as they have been represented, a set of amiable and well-meaning,

[1] *Christian Leaders of the Last Century*, by J. C. Ryle, preface.

but weak and illiterate fanatics. But their forte no doubt lay more in preaching and in practical work than in writing.

Again, the stream of theological thought has to a great extent drifted into a different current from that in which it ran in their day, and this change may have prevented many good men from sympathising with them as they deserved. The Evangelicals of the last century represented one side, but only one side, of our Church's teaching. With the spirituality and fervency of her liturgy and the 'Gospel' character of all her formularies, they were far more in harmony than the so-called 'orthodox' of their day. But they did not, to say the least of it, bring into prominence what are now called, and what would have been called in the seventeenth century, the 'Catholic' features of the English Church. They simply regarded her as one of many 'Protestant' communions. Distinctive Church principles, in the technical sense of the term, formed no part of their teaching. Daily services, frequent communions, the due observance of her Fasts and Festivals, all that is implied in the terms 'the æstheticism and symbolism of worship,' found no place in their course. The consequence was, that while they formed a compact and influential body which still remained *within* the pale of the Church, they also revived very largely, though unintentionally, the Dissenting interest, which was at least in as drooping condition as the Church of England before the Evangelical school arose. But every English Churchman has reason to be deeply grateful to them for what they did, however much he may be of opinion that their work required supplementing by others no less earnest, but of a different tone of thought.

J. H. O.

CHAPTER III.[1]

SACRED POETRY.

THE latter part of the seventeenth century had been singularly barren in sacred poetry, as compared with the preceding period. Milton died in 1674; Herrick the same year; Crashaw and Phineas Fletcher in 1650, the latter surviving by twenty-seven years his younger brother Giles, the no less gifted author of 'Christ's Victory.' Drummond died in 1679; Sandys and Quarles in 1644; George Herbert in 1635; Dr. Donne in 1631; Sir John Davies in 1626. The great authors of the Elizabethan age were still writing under the reign of the first Stuart. There are passages of true religious value in Shakespeare, whose noblest productions almost all belong to the seventeenth century. Sir Walter Raleigh's hymns were written in that period,[2] and Lord Bacon's Psalms.[3] It would be easy to cite verses upon sacred subjects, well worthy of being preserved, from the dramatists Ben Jonson[4] and Shirley,[5] from the Puritans Withers and Andrew Marvel,[6]

[1] This subject is treated mainly, but by no means exclusively, in relation to the Church of England.

[2] A fine passage beginning 'Rise, O my soul' is quoted in Saunders, F., *Evenings with the Sacred Poets*, 223.

[3] Lord Bacon's 'Seven Paraphrases,' written at the close of his life, are of no great poetical value, but contain some noticeable lines, as

> 'I know that He my words will not despise;
> Thanksgiving is to Him a sacrifice.'—Saunders, 226.

In one place he cannot refrain from introducing, not however without some suggestive beauty, reference to a discovery in physical science, where, speaking of the glory of the Divine presence, he writes,

> 'Thence round about a silver veil doth fall
> Of chrystal light, mother of colours all.'—*Qu. Rev.* vol. 38, 29.

[4] For example, his 'Hymn to God the Father,' quoted in G. Macdonald's *England's Antiphon*, 153.

[5] *Saunders*, 253.

[6] Author of 'The Emigrant's Hymn,' 'Where the remote Bermudas ride In Ocean's bosom unespied.'—Spalding's *Hist. of Eng. Literature*, 300.

from Sir Henry Wotton, Habington, Peter Heylyn, Jeremy Taylor,[1] Randolph Crossman,[2] Sir Thomas Browne.[3] Nor must the name of Cowley be omitted, if it were but for his verses upon that great subject which was soon to engross so much thought—the relations between Reason and Revelation :—

> The Holy Book, like the eighth sphere, doth shine
> With thousand lights of truth divine.
> So numberless the stars, that to the eye
> It makes but all one galaxy.
> Yet Reason must assist too; for in seas
> So vast and dangerous as these,
> Our course by stars above we cannot know,
> Without the compass too below.[4]

But of all this race of poets Milton was the last survivor, and he, secluded by his blindness and by the political changes which had happened, had little or nothing in common with the outward world of Charles II.'s time. His 'soul was like a star and dwelt apart.'[5] Edmund Waller lived on to 1687, but he belonged to a much earlier generation; his earlier verses were, in fact, written within twenty years of Spenser's latest. Yet his last short poem, dictated 'when we for age could neither read nor write,' is worthy to be compared with anything that he had produced in his prime of life :—

> The soul's dark cottage, battered and decayed,
> Lets in new light through chinks that time had made :
> Stronger by weakness, wiser men become,
> As they draw near to their eternal home,

[1] Jeremy Taylor wrote several hymns, as that for Christmas day, beginning,

> 'Arise, my soul, and come away,
> Put on thy best array,
> Lest if thou longer stay,
> Thou lose some minutes of so blest a day.'

[2] Author of the well-known hymn 'Jerusalem on high My Song and City is.' C. Rogers' *Lyra Britannica*. E. Palmer's *Book of Praise*, &c.

[3] See a hymn quoted in his *Religio Medici*, bearing many resemblances to that of Ken. He used it daily in his evening prayer, as his 'dormitive,' or laudanum, whereby to close his eyes in peace. *Relig. Med.* 153.

[4] 'Reason in Divine Matters,' stanza 5, *Miscellanies, B. Poets*, v. 235. It somewhat resembles the often quoted opening passage in Dryden's *Religio Laici*.

[5] Wordsworth's xivth sonnet to National Liberty.

Leaving the old, both worlds at once they view,
That stand upon the threshold of the new.[1]

There were, however, a few writers of sacred poetry belonging more properly to the period which followed the Restoration. Lord Roscommon, the author of a fine paraphrase of the 118th Psalm, died in 1684, with words upon his lips taken from his own hymn on the Day of Judgment:—

My God, my Father, and my Friend,
Do not forsake me at the end.[2]

A noble vein of poetry lingered, where it might be expected, among those thoughtful and high-minded writers, the Oxford and Cambridge Platonists. Henry More, who died in 1687, published his poems forty years earlier. But Norris and Vaughan, his brothers in the same philosophy, both belong to the latter end of the century. Norris may, in fact, be spoken of as belonging in some degree to the period which these chapters deal with, for he lived till 1711. Henry Vaughan, who died in 1695, wrote verses which deserve to be placed in the very foremost ranks of devotional poetry. Some of his lines, if somewhat rugged in their metre, are yet exquisite. He is speaking of the spirits of just men made perfect:—

I see them walking in an air of glory,
Whose light doth trample on my days—
My days, which are at best but dull and hoary,
Mere glimmerings and decays.
O holy hope and high humility,
High as the heavens above!
These are your walks, and you have showed them me
To kindle my cold love.
Dear, beauteous Death! the jewel of the just!
Shining nowhere but in the dark!
What mysteries do lie beyond thy dust,
Could man outlook that mark.

John Mason, Rector of Water Stratford, a man of deep piety, published his 'Songs of Praise' in 1683. They have

[1] Concluding verses on his 'Divine Poems,' Anderson's *B. Poets*, v. 506.
[2] From his life in *British Poets*, vi. 422.

passed through twenty[1] editions, and some of his hymns find a place in most modern collections of sacred poetry. He died in 1694. Richard Baxter (1615–91) wrote a paraphrase of the Psalms, and much verse besides. But his fame as a sacred poet rests chiefly upon one hymn: 'Lord, it belongs not to my care, Whether I live or die.' Dryden's noble version of the *Veni Creator* is dated 1687.

'The Revolution,' remarks Hallam, 'did nothing for poetry. William's reign, always excepting Dryden, is our *nadir* in works of imagination.'[2] It must have seemed to many as if English poetry had almost died with the death of Dryden in 1701.

Yet the very first year of the eighteenth century was distinguished by a very notable accession to the treasures of sacred verse. *Bishop Ken's* Morning, Evening, and Midnight Hymns were first published in 1700, in the seventh edition of his Manual of Prayer for Winchester Scholars. He hoped they would say these hymns the first thing on waking, and the last on going to sleep, remembering that it is a good thing to tell of the lovingkindness of the Lord early in the morning, and of His truth in the night season.[3] His midnight hymn, beginning—

> Lord, now my sleep does me forsake,
> The sole possession of me take—

verses better known, perhaps, to this generation than they had been for a century and a half before—was to be stored up in memory, with the 130th and 139th Psalms, for wakeful nights. 'But have a care, Philotheus,' he added, 'you fix not your mind too much, for fear of hindering your sleep.'[4] The good bishop himself used daily, immediately upon rising, to sing to his lute his Morning Hymn. He was accustomed, it appears, to adapt the words to his own tunes, for he was skilled in music, and his compositions were grave and solemn.[5] The melody, however, to which the three hymns were originally printed, and which suffered in the course of time corruptions

[1] G. Macdonald's *England's Antiphon*, 272.
[2] Hallam's *Literature of Europe*, vi. 440.
[3] Ken's *Manual*, 6. [4] *Manual*, 29.
[5] *Life of Ken*, by a Layman, 1181.

which changed its very structure, was Ravenscroft's version of Tallis's eighth tune. It will be found in the first appendix to the 'Life of Ken, by a Layman.'

Ken's devotional poems were very numerous. To make and sing them was his recreation and chief delight; his anodyne in seasons of wearying pain; his comfort through many a sleepless night. The nightingale warbling in the darkness troubles itself well nigh as little about what listening men may think of its song, as Ken of the impression which his hymns might leave upon the ears of critics. 'His poems,' as Keble truly says, are not popular, nor probably ever will be. . . . The narrative is often cumbrous, and the lyric verse not seldom languid and redundant.'[1] That simpler style, in which all his best verses are written, is constantly interrupted by a strained and artificial diction, in which he imitated Cowley, with none of Cowley's brilliancy. Ken himself was not blind to their faults. More than once, he says, he was inclined to burn them, and only refrained from doing so in the thought that verses which reflected the glow and raptures of his own soul might kindle other hearts also. And though his poems may sometimes be greatly improved by the judicious curtailment or omission of stanzas,[2] and would no doubt have gained greatly in point of harmony by careful revision; all, in this age at least, will agree that no hand but that of the original author is qualified for such a work. When John Byrom was asked to revise these poems, he made the only proper answer—

> Patchwork improvements in the modern style,
> Bestow'd upon some venerable pile,
> Do but deface it. Poems to revise
> That Ken has wrote—another Ken must rise.[3]

There can be no object in quoting from the more prosaic or inharmonious verses which he often wrote. Many, however, of his lines are very beautiful.

[1] *Qu. Rev.* 32, 230.

[2] Compare, for instance, his 'Days Numbered' in 'Preparatives for Death,' Hawkins's ed. of Ken's *Works*, iv. 17, with the same poem, abbreviated by omissions, in *Selections from the Poetical Works of Ken.*

[3] Byrom's Works, *B. Poets* (Chalmers's ed.), xv. 265.

From 'Hymns on the Festivals':—

God sweetly calls us every day,
Why should we then our bliss delay?
He calls to endless light,
Why should we love the night?
Should we one call but duly heed,
It would to joys eternal lead.[1]

From 'God's Attributes or Perfections':—

God's children love all human race,
In whom they God's dear image trace;
More likeness they attain,
The greater love they gain:
Saints in whom love is most express'd,
Fraternal charity loves best.[2]

From 'Psyche':—

My God, Thou only art
Able to know, keep, rule the heart;
O make my heart Thy care,
Which I myself to keep despair.
No rebels then will garrison my breast,
Beneath Almighty wings my heart will live at rest.[3]

Ken, in the dedication prefixed to his works, compares himself, not (he modestly adds) in gifts or graces, but in the circumstances of his later life, to Gregory of Nazianzum. Like him, he had been driven from his episcopal see; like him, he delighted to beguile the pains, the austerities, the infirmities of the seclusion in which he spent his declining years with hymns and 'songs devout.'[4] But there were points of far more than outward resemblance between Ken and Gregory, or between Ken and Chrysostom, Gregory's still more distinguished successor in the bishopric of Constantinople. The ascetic temperament, the spirit, bold and fearless on occasion, but delighting above all in tranquil, contemplative reveries, the poetical imagination, the somewhat cramped

[1] Byrom's Works, *B. Poets*, i. 383. [2] Id. ii. 89. [3] Id. iv. 201.

[4] If Gregory's narrative poems were sometimes (Milman, *Early Christianity*, iii. 468) weak and garrulous, some of his hymns, as for instance one for the evening (Saunders' *Evenings with the S. Poets*, 25) are among the finest that have come down to us. In these points too Ken resembled his prototype.

sacerdotalism and anxious orthodoxy, combined with utter aversion to controversy, and a tendency to view all Christian doctrines with sole reference to their bearing upon sanctity of life—all these features are observable in Ken as in Gregory and Chrysostom. Alexander Knox, in a letter to Hannah More,[1] has left some excellent remarks upon what he calls the 'Chrysostomian piety' which he finds more conspicuous in Ken than in almost any other English writer. Without in any way undervaluing the great work which Protestantism had done and was doing, he saw what seemed to him a frequent deficiency in it, as compared with some of the higher types of excellence in the primitive Church. There appeared to him too little attention to anything except the salvation of the individual, an anxious self-seeking which might be of an exalted kind, and fruitful in works of righteousness, but which falls short of a higher standard, not incapable of being attained. There was also an intellectual restlessness and disquietude tending to similar results. 'But there was a primitive excellence in the Christian Church—a sublimity as well as simplicity of piety; in which, without any puzzle of the head, there was a seraphic glow of heart, a fire of divine love, without the smoke of dark dogmas.' He finds it 'blessedly enshrined in our Liturgy;' he finds it embodied in a very high degree in Jeremy Taylor among ourselves, in Arndt among the Lutherans; and yet even in Jeremy Taylor a little overborne by the brilliancy of learning, philosophy, and mental ardour. He finds it—not, however, without some counterbalancing elements derived from Calvinism or from philosophy—in Leighton, Worthington, John Smith, Cudworth, Baxter, Doddridge. Examples of it were more frequent, he thought, among thoroughly pious Romanists. The surrender of their intellects to the Church on all doubtful and controverted questions might seem to have 'left their hearts at full liberty to pursue undividedly their holy and happy instincts of spiritual devotion and love. . . . Doubtless, the Roman Church is like a garden overrun with weeds, neither pleasant to the eyes nor good for food; but then there are in this garden some old fruit trees which bear fruit of extraordinary

[1] 'On the Design of Providence respecting the Christian Church,' *Remains*, iii. 102–230.

mellowness.'[1] But none, he thought, in any Church have approached nearer the primitive warmth of soul than Bishop Ken.

George Hickes did a service to the Nonjuring and other Anglican Churchmen of his age, in the hymns provided for their use in his 'Book of Devotion.'[2] Few, however, if any of them, were his own composition. They were mostly written by John Austin, adapted to the use of Reformed Churches by Theophilus Dorrington.[3] The book passed through several editions, and the hymns well deserve notice, both for their intrinsic merit, and as being one of the first indications that a new style of hymnody would gradually supplant those metrical versions of the Psalms which hitherto had been almost in sole use among English Churchmen.

A few examples may be given :—

Hymn I., out of 'Office for Sunday Mattins' :—

Behold we come, dear Lord, to Thee,
And bow before Thy throne;
We come to offer on our knee
Our vows to Thee alone.

Whate'er we have, whate'er we are,
Thy bounty freely gave;
Thou dost us here in mercy spare,
And wilt hereafter save.

. . . . .

Come then, my soul, bring all thy powers,
And grieve thou hast no more,
Bring every day thy choicest hours,
And thy great God adore.

But, above all, prepare thine heart
On this, His own blest day,
In its sweet task to bear thy part,
And sing, and love, and pray.

Hymn VI., out of 'Office for Sunday Lauds' :—

Hark, my soul, how every thing
Strives to serve our bounteous King :

[1] P. 226. [2] 'Devotions in the Ancient Way of Offices,' 1701.

[3] Roundell Palmer, note to Hymn lxx. in his *Book of Praise*. C. B. Pearson in *Oxford Essays*, 1858, 141.

Each a double tribute pays,
Sings its part, and then obeys.

Nature's sweet and chiefest quire
Him with cheerful notes admire ;
Chanting every day their lauds,
While the grove their song applauds.

Though their voices lower be,
Streams have too their melody ;
Night and day they warbling run,
Never pause, but still sing on.

All the flowers that gild the spring
Hither their still music bring ;
If heav'n bless them, thankful they
Smell more sweet, and look more gay.

Only we can scarce afford
Our short office to our Lord ;
We on whom His bounty flows,
All things gives and nothing owes.

Wake for shame, my sluggish heart,
Wake, and gladly sing thy part :
Learn of birds and springs and flowers
How to use thy nobler powers.

Call all nature to thy aid,
Since 'twas He whole nature made ;
Join in one eternal song,
Who to one God all belong.

Live for ever, glorious Lord !
Live by all thy works ador'd !
One in Three and Three in One,
Thrice we bow to Thee alone.

The last quotation shall be simply a doxology, which has the merit of being at once terse and fervid. It is from the Tuesday Compline :—

All glory to the sacred Three,
One ever living Lord ;
As at the first, still may He be
Belov'd, obey'd, ador'd.

Perhaps an apology is needed for including among eighteenth century poets the name of *Norris* of Bemerton. Yet it is a pleasure that may fairly be allowed to the writer. Athough most, if not all, of Norris's poetry was composed and published before the close of the seventeenth century, a great part of his labours belongs to the period included in these chapters. He was only fifty-four in 1711, when he died, and his later life was a time of great intellectual activity. In 1691 he had been appointed to the Rectory of Bemerton, where George Herbert had been his predecessor sixty years before. 'Here,' says Wilmott, 'he lay concealed from the pomp and vanity of life; here he sent up daily to the gate of heaven the music of a gentle and contented heart; here he wove those beautiful dreams of philosophy that seemed to recall not only the countenance, but the voice of Plato. That old and tranquil parsonage was to him a happy hiding place.'[1] The words of his epitaph are '*bene latuit.*' His poems, which received their last corrections in 1710, bear but a very small proportion to his other works. He had praised brevity. 'I'm sure,' said he, 'the multitude of books and the shortness of life require it; and sense will lye in a small compass, if men would be persuaded to vent no notions but what they are masters of; and were angels to write, I fancy we should have but few folios.'[2] He was a voluminous writer nevertheless.

Norris's poems passed through a tenth edition in 1730. A volume of sermons on the Beatitudes, which are spoken of as 'radiant with beauty of fancy and form,'[3] had passed through a fifteenth edition in 1728. At this time, therefore, he must have been well known as a writer. Afterwards, though frequently pilfered from, his poetry seems to have fallen into neglect, if not oblivion. There was, in truth, very little in common between him and the general spirit of the eighteenth century. He was the last of that family of Christian Platonists—More, Cudworth, John Smith, Vaughan, Whichcot and Wilkins, whose pure and lofty idealism had shed a parting lustre alike upon the philosophy and the poetry

[1] R. A. Wilmott, *Pictures of Christian Life.*

[2] Preface to 'Miscellanies,' *Poems*, ed. Grosart, 35.

[3] Grosart, A. B., Introd. to Norris's *Poems*, 11.

of the latter half of the century preceding. There is the same noble tone of spiritualised thought and wistful, imaginative speculation, as with them, and a like 'golden haze'[1] over it all, and an occasional fancifulness of the spurious kind prevalent in their age, which disfigures rather than adorns.

All the poetry of Norris has more or less a sacred tone. Poetry, he truly said, was 'of late mightily fallen from the beauty of its idea, and from its ancient majesty and grandeur, as well as credit and reputation. . . . That which we generally have now-a-days is no more like the thing it was formerly, than modern religion is like primitive Christianity.'[2] He desired to do what in him lay 'to wind up the strings of the Muse's lyre,' and write poems according to his power 'after the divine and moral way. Without this mixture, poetry is nothing worth.'[3]

Norris will not please all. His poetry is not adapted to catch the popular ear. It needs for its appreciation a certain amount of thought and education. And even then, some will set it aside as too 'metaphysical;' and some, without much reason, have accused it of being strained and affected.[4] But many have read his verses with great admiration; and his admirers would be more numerous now than they were through a great part of the last century.

A stanza in his poem entitled 'The Parting' should be quoted both for its beauty, and also because in it is originated a striking and now very familiar metaphor, which was borrowed from him first by Blair, and afterwards by Campbell:—

> How fading are the joys we dote upon,
> Like apparitions seen and gone:
> But those which soonest take their flight
> Are the most exquisite and strong.
> Like angels' visits, short and bright;
> Mortality 's too weak to bear them long.[5]

The great problem, the solemn mystery of death, pos-

[1] Grosart, A. B., Introd. to Norris's *Poems*, 10.
[2] Id. 'To the Reader,' 32.
[3] Id. 33.
[4] *Qu. Rev.* 35, 188.
[5] *Poems*, 57.

sessed a great fascination for his mind. He often alludes to it, as for example :—

What a strange moment will that be,
My soul, how full of curiosity,
When wing'd, and ready for thy eternal flight,
On th' utmost edges of thy tottering clay,
Hovering, and wishing longer stay,
Thou shalt advance and have Eternity in sight!
When just about to try that unknown sea,
What a strange moment will that be!

But yet how much more strange that state
When, loosen'd from th' embrace of this close mate,
Thou shalt at once be plung'd in liberty,
And move as free and active as a ray
Shot from the lucid spring of day!
Thou who just now was clogg'd with dull mortality.[1]

The following, from 'Seraphic Love,' deserves to be cited as much as any. It expresses in ardent language that intense realisation to the mental view of the Christian type of all goodness, which often gives a spiritual glow to the contemplations of Norris, More, and other 'Christian Platonists' :—

Through Contemplation's optics I have seen
Him who is 'fairer than the sons of men :'
The source of good, the light archetypall,
Beauty in the original.
'The fairest of ten thousand,' He,
Proportion all and harmony.
All mortal beauty's but a ray
Of His bright ever-shining day;
A little, feeble, twinkling star,
Which, now the sun's in place, must disappear.
There is but One that's good, there is but One that's fair.

To thee, Thou only fair, my soul aspires
With holy breathings, languishing desires.
To Thee m' inamoured panting heart does move,
By efforts of ecstatic love.
How do Thy glorious streams of light
Refresh my intellectual sight!

[1] 'The Prospect,' *Poems*, p. 176.

Tho' broken, and strain'd through a screen
Of envious flesh that stands between!
When shall m' imprison'd soul be free,
That she Thy native uncorrected light may see,
And gaze upon Thy beatific face to all eternity?[1]

The works of three accomplished women may next claim notice.

Lady Chudleigh, authoress of essays which obtained some repute, died in 1710. Her poems were published in 1703, and a third edition of them in 1722. In that entitled 'The Resolve,'[2] we may trace the spirit of an age in which religion was commonly arrayed, and sometimes disguised, under the sober garb of contemplations upon reason and virtue.

A miscellany of poems published anonymously[3] by the *Countess of Winchelsea* in 1713, would scarcely call for remark on the mere account of the two or three sacred pieces interspersed among its fables, moral apologues, pastorals and Pindaric odes. It contains the story not unfrequently found in selections, and put a second time into verse by Hannah More, of the 'Atheist and the Acorn.'[4] There is a paraphrase of the 148th Psalm,[5] written with some spirit, and appended to a poem on the famous hurricane—unparalleled in our latitudes—of 1703. But her special title to notice rests almost entirely upon a poem which has only an indirect bearing, though not an unimportant one, upon that class of sacred poetry which finds its chief material in the more spiritual aspects of outward nature. Wordsworth observes of her 'Nocturnal Reverie' that, with the exception of a passage or two in the 'Windsor Forest' of Pope, it is the only poetry of the period intervening between the publication of the 'Paradise Lost' and the 'Seasons,' in which external phenomena were contemplated with any originality or genuine imagination.[6]

The name of *Elizabeth Rowe* stands high among the writers of sacred poetry in the eighteenth century. She was

[1] *Poems*, ed. 64.
[2] Quoted in Al. Dyce's *Specimens of British Poetesses*, 129.
[3] *Miscellany Poems on several Occasions*, written by a Lady, 1713.
[4] Id. 202. [5] Id. 248.
[6] Wordsworth's 'Essay supplementary to Preface,' *Poet. Works*, v. 213.

daughter of a Mr. Singer, a Dissenting minister of good family and competent fortune, who once suffered imprisonment for Nonconformity, and was living in William III.'s reign at Ilchester. It is pleasant to hear that he enjoyed the hearty friendship[1] of Bishop Ken, who was then living under Lord Weymouth's roof at Longleat. The bishop, who enjoyed his society, paid constant visits at his house, where, notwithstanding wide differences of opinion on Church matters, he found, both in father and daughter, much congeniality in thought and tastes.[2] Elizabeth Singer's talents were great and early developed. An early copy of verses had attracted the attention of the generous and kindly family at Longleat, where she soon became a constant guest. The poet Prior wished, it is said, to marry her; but in 1710 she became the wife of Thomas Rowe, a young author of some promise, who died five years later at the early age of twenty-eight. After his death she lived in retirement at Frome, and died in 1737.

Her earlier poems were published in 1696 under the title of 'Philomela': a name which soon became familiar, if not to the general throng[3] which haunted the literary coffee-houses, at least to all lovers of high-toned religious poetry. Both in her poetical and devotional writings there is a fervour which sometimes almost transgresses the bounds of sober piety, and which, in an age abhorrent of 'enthusiasm,' was looked upon with much suspicion even by those who most admired her talents. 'Some of her expressions,' says Watts, who edited, very soon after her death, her 'Devout Exercises of the Heart,' 'are a little too rapturous and too near akin to the language of the mystical writers.'[4] 'The reader will here find a spirit dwelling in flesh elevated into divine transports congenial to those of angels and unbodied minds.'[5]

Her character appears to have been one of much beauty. Her letters convey the idea of a bright and happy temperament.

[1] *Life of Bishop Ken*, by a Layman, p. 628. [2] Id.

[3] 'Meets Philomela in the town
Her due proportion of renown?'

Lady Winchelsea's Poems, 'The Miser and the Poet,' *Miscellany*, 148.

[4] *Devout Exercises of the Heart*, by Mrs. Rowe, ed. by J. Watts, second ed. 1737, Dedication. [5] Id. Preface by Watts, xiii.

Half her property was dedicated to beneficent purposes,[1] and her poorer neighbours always found in her a most kindly friend; while her amiable disposition and accomplished mind rendered her society courted in the best circles.[2] Her piety, wholly free from Puritan moroseness, was controlled and kept in balance without losing any of its impassioned ardour. It is interesting too to see in her the intimate friend of two good men so widely different from one another as Bishop Ken and Dr. Watts. It may be added that she won also the more than ungrudging praise of a sister poetess whose diversified talents were even more conspicuous than her own. Elizabeth Carter, in one of her earlier poems panegyrised, in the warmest terms, the goodness, the talent, the refined fancy of her predecessor, and the power of her songs to 'wake the nobler motions of the soul,' verses 'kindled with an ecstatic flame, such as angels might feel.'[3]

Perhaps the poem which, both in its beauties and defects, is most characteristic of this author, is 'A Hymn in Imitation of Canticles V–VII.' Southey has on this account selected it for quotation in his book on the 'Later English Poets.'[4] It should be remembered that a hundred and fifty years ago, as in the preceding periods, the religious significance of the 'Book of Canticles' was far more frequently dwelt upon in sermons and in religious works generally, than has been the case in later years:—

Ye pure inhabitants of light,
Ye virgin minds above,
That feel the sacred violence,
The mighty force of love!

By all your boundless joys, by all
Your love to human kind,
I charge you to instruct me where
My absent Lord to find.

[1] *Works in Prose and Verse*, &c. i. lxxvii.

[2] Watts' Preface to *Devout Exercises*, xviii.

[3] 'On the Death of Mrs. Rowe, 1739.'—*Life and Works of Mrs. E. Carter*, p. 30.

[4] Southey's *Later English Poets*, i. 349.

I've search'd the pleasant hills and vales,
And climb'd the hills around,
But no glad tidings of my love
Among the swains have found.

I've oft invoked him in the shades,
By every stream and rock;
The rocks, the streams, and echoing shades
My vain industry mock.

I trac'd the city's noisy streets,
And told my love aloud;
But no intelligence could meet
Among the thoughtless crowd.

I've searched the temple round, for there
He oft has blest my sight,
And half unveiled, of his lovely face
Disclos'd the heavenly light.

But with these glorious views no more
I feast my ravish'd eyes;
For veil'd with interposing clouds [1]
My eager search he flies.

Oh, could I in some desert land
His sacred footsteps trace,
I'd with a glad devotion kneel
And bless the sacred place.

Nor stormy winds should stay my course,
Nor unfrequented shore,
Nor craggy Alps, nor desert wastes,
Where hungry lions roar.

[1] In her hymn 'In vain the Dusky Night,' the same thought is well expressed in more sober language:

'When, when shall I behold thy face
All radiant and serene,
Without these envious, dusky clouds
That make a veil between?

'When shall that long expected day
Of sacred vision be,
When my impatient soul shall make
A near approach to Thee?'

The fervour of Mrs. Rowe's poetry might be instanced in a free but fine version of the 63rd Psalm, beginning:

'O God, my first, my last, my steadfast choice,
My boundless bliss, the strength of all my joys.'

Through ranks of interposing death
To his embrace I'd fly,
And to enjoy his blissful smiles
Would be content to die.[1]

Ralph Thoresby enters into his diary for September 10, 1724, that he had been 'visited by that noted poet, Mr. [*Samuel*] *Wesley*.'[2] Some mention is at all events due to the father of John and Charles Wesley, in his character as a writer of sacred poetry. Though his father and grandfather had been successively vicars of Charmouth, he was brought up, during his boyhood, in a Nonconformist academy. He afterwards became a staunch High Churchman, a friend of Robert Nelson[3] and other leading men of that party, an active promoter of the newly-founded Church Societies,[4] and somewhat over-eager in his opposition to Dissenters.[5] He declined an Irish bishopric, and became rector, first of South Ormesby, and afterwards of Epworth, both in Lincolnshire. His son Samuel, elder brother of John and Charles, in a poem entitled 'The Parish Priest,' published in 1736, the year after his father's death, has left an affectionate and reverential tribute to his memory:—

A parish priest, not of the pilgrim kind,[6]
But fixed and faithful to the post assigned;
Through various scenes with equal virtue trod,
True to his oath, his order, and his God.

. . . . .

His looks the tenour of his soul express,
An easy, unaffected cheerfulness,
Steadfast not stiff, and awful not austere,
Tho' courteous, reverend, and tho' smooth sincere,
In converse free, for every subject fit,
The coolest reason joined to keenest wit.[7]

He tells that he was 'a guardian angel to the sick and poor, that there was not a Dissenter or a Papist in his parish,

[1] *Works*, &c. i. 131.
[2] R. Thoresby's *Diary*, ii. 413.
[3] C. F. Secretan's *Life of Nelson*, 101.
[4] G. G. Perry, *Hist. of the Ch. of E.*, iii. 91.
[5] Letter of S. Wesley to Hearne, *Reliq. Hearnianæ*, 40.
[6] This almost seems to hint at his brother, who had just started for Georgia.
[7] *Poems on Several Occasions*, by S. Wesley, Master of Blundell's School, Tiverton, &c., 1736, pp. 66–72.

that he refused to read King James's Declaration, though expecting to be deprived for it, and that he was an indefatigable searcher after truth.'[1] This worthy clergyman was a voluminous writer of sacred poetry. His principal work was an heroic poem, in ten books, upon 'the Life of Christ,' published in 1693.[2] It was received at the time with much applause. Nahum Tate bowed from the laureate throne upon which he had just ascended, and feigned with proud humility that his own glories would by comparison grow dim.

> Even we, the tribe who thought ourselves inspir'd,
> Like glimmering stars in night's dull reign admir'd,
> Like stars, a numerous but a feeble host,
> Are gladly in your morning lustre lost.[3]

Luke Milbourne, also a translator of the Psalms, was no less effusive in his praise. But Pope makes Milbourne chief flamen in his empire of dulness, and puts into his mouth the dictum that 'Dulness is sacred in a sound divine.'[4] Perhaps, therefore, the praises of Milbourne and of Nahum Tate may not be altogether inconsistent with an opinion that Samuel Wesley's sacred heroics are tedious and prosaic. The book, however, brought its author for the time into considerable note. Poetry was just then, with few exceptions, at a very low ebb; and encomiums were often freely lavished upon verses which would by no means satisfy a higher standard of poetical taste. And, independently of its merits, whatever they might be, as a composition, a synoptical view of the Gospels, in a new form, and amply furnished with Scripture references, worked out by a man of no mean talent, was sure to deserve and obtain much respectful attention. It may be added that the work was brought out in very handsome form, in folio, illustrated with sixty admirable copperplates. In 1704 he published and dedicated to Queen Anne a metrical 'History of the Old and New Testaments,' also richly adorned with engravings. The poem which he described as 'the last

[1] *Poems on Several Occasions*, by S. Wesley, Dedication.

[2] *The Life of Christ*, by S. Wesley. An Heroic Poem, 1693.

[3] Prefixed, with other complimentary verses, to the poem in the edition referred to.

[4] Pope's *Dunciad*, ii. 352.

effort of a retiring muse'[1] was an elegy, written in 1715, upon the death of his revered friend, Robert Nelson.

Samuel Wesley, the younger, died in 1739, only four years after his father. After leaving Christ Church he was second master for twenty years at his old school of Westminster. At the time of his death he was head-master of the Grammar School at Tiverton. He shared the poetical tastes common to his two brothers, and published in 1736 a collection of poems, upon a variety of secular and sacred subjects.[2] His 'Battle of the Sexes,' founded upon one of Addison's papers in the 'Guardian,' is that by which he was best known. It is called by Alexander Chalmers 'a noble allegoric poem.'[3] What he wrote was sometimes humorous, but always pure and healthy in tone. Contemporary authors would, many of them, have done well to remember his homely advice—

> If e'er to writing you pretend,
> Your utmost aid and study bend
> The paths of virtue to befriend,
> However mean your ditty;
>
> That while your verse the reader draws
> To Reason and Religion's laws,
> None e'er hereafter may have cause
> To curse your being witty.[4]

The few hymns he wrote are not very noteworthy, though two or three of them, occasionally to be found in selections, contain some verses, which would have been quite worthy of his brother Charles.

No one hears now of *Pomfret's* poems. He is usually known only by name as one among a host of minor poets; and they who have read his works see no particular reason why he should be rescued from such oblivion. It was not so in the last century. During the whole of that period his verses were held in a repute as great as it was remarkable in kind. From the critics and judges of poetry he could obtain nothing but indifference; but, for some reason or other, he

[1] Prefixed to some edition of Nelson's *Practice of True Devotion*.
[2] *Poems on Several Occasions*, 1736.
[3] Al. Chalmers's edition of *The Guardian*, note to No. 152.
[4] From 'Advice to one who was about to write.'—*Poems*, &c.

thoroughly gained the ear of the multitude. For a hundred years 'Pomfret's poems were always on sale at the stalls of itinerant vendors and at country booksellers', printed upon coarse paper and in sheepskin binding, in company with "Robinson Crusoe," the "Pilgrim's Progress," Defoe's "Religious Courtship," Young's "Night Thoughts," and Hervey's "Meditations." During the whole of the eighteenth century no other volume of poems was so often reprinted or held in such popular estimation. It was even printed in America in the middle of that century, when so few books had been printed there, that two pages might comprise the catalogue.'[1] The writer of the above words, unable to give any satisfactory explanation of this popularity, thinks it must be attributed merely to a kind of prescription, which by some chance had established itself among the trade. Southey is no less perplexed. He heads his extracts from Pomfret with the few words: 'Spoken of as the most popular of poets. Why?'[2] And Dr. Johnson, while specially recommending him to his publishers for a place in his 'Lives of the Poets,'[3] seems to have thought that his popularity was that which alone entitled him to the honour. 'He pleases many; and he who pleases many must have some kind of merit.'[4] There must be some reason for so marked an exception—in regard at least of the bookstalls—to the old and well-proved dictum:—

Mediocribus esse poetis
Non homines, non dî, non concessere columnæ.

Probably the long immunity from fate which Pomfret's poetical reputation gained was chiefly owing to the pleasure which average human nature always feels in finding its own ideas—those at all events which are most creditable or respectable—smoothly clothed in language above, but not too much above, its own level. Pomfret appears to have had more than usual success in satisfying this natural desire. He had not a tenth part of the power which Pope possessed, of aptly expressing in terse, harmonious, and well-chosen words obvious ideas. But he anticipated Pope by many years—a great advantage to him, as it was to other of the mediocrists.

[1] *Q. Rev.* 35, 189. [2] Southey's *Later English Poets*, i. 96.
[3] Dr. Johnson's *Lives of the Poets*, iii. 247. [4] Id. ii. 4.

Besides that, there was a great amiability in Pomfret which was wanting in Pope; and with the class of readers among whom his writings were chiefly circulated, brilliancy rather impedes than promotes success. Much in the same way as among his secular poems 'The Choice' touched with a light and easy hand those objects of ambition which come most home to the heart of an ordinary Englishman in relation to earthly comfortableness, so in handling sacred topics Pomfret keeps well within the range of such religious and moral ideas as the bulk of well-meaning people can easily aspire to. His verses on religious subjects stand on an altogether different footing from that of popular hymns, and appeal to a different set of emotions. The poem upon the Divine Attributes is a metrical rendering—its didactic character distinguished under a 'Pindaric' form[1]—of just those reasonings which might pass in more rudimentary shape through the mind of any tolerably intelligent person. Thoughts which all men are more or less alive to, of human life and of infinity, are suggested, without being entered into too deeply or with too refined argument for a moderate and uncultivated intellect. It is a poem which, no doubt, many a simple reader has perused on a Sunday evening without any real intellectual labour, but yet with a feeling that his reason has been mildly stimulated, and the foundations of his religion strengthened. Much the same may be said of that entitled 'Reason,' written in the first year of the century. His other religious poems probably owed their popularity to another cause. His 'Prospect of Death,' his 'General Conflagration,' and his 'Last Epiphany,' are all wanting in the grave solemnity and subdued earnestness of tone which best befits such subjects. But their very faults probably made these poems more attractive to those who chiefly read them. The 'Prospect of Death' enters into details which are only painful or repulsive to cultivated tastes, but which in the opinion of many gave new force to the description and additional pathos.

Sir Richard Blackmore was the favourite butt for the satire of the wits and poets of his day. He was a very worthy man, most anxious to promote the interests of religion and

[1] Almost every writer in verse for three parts of the last century essayed Pindaric odes.

virtue. But he was afflicted with the *cacoethes scribendi*, and was unhappily possessed with the idea that his lucubrations would be more effective and popular if they took a metrical form. All the spare moments of the estimable knight, as he drove from one patient to another, appear to have been dedicated to the composition of verses either for his next epic in ten books, or for his version of the Psalms, or for his forthcoming volume of didactic poetry upon sacred and philosophical subjects. Effusions written, as Dryden said, 'to the rumbling of his chariot wheels,' and bearing for the most part scanty marks of revision, were very frequently a legitimate mark for the ridicule with which Dryden, Wycherley, Philips, Gay, Swift, Pope, and a host of others, overwhelmed each new production as it appeared from the press.

Yet Blackmore had many admirers, and among them were some whose opinions are always worthy of respect. Addison, at the conclusion of one of his papers on Milton, called special attention to the poem on 'Creation.' 'The work,' he said, 'was undertaken with so good an intention, and is executed with so great a mastery, that it deserves to be looked upon as one of the most useful and noble productions in our English verse.'[1] Dr. Johnson said of this same poem, that 'if he had written nothing else it would have transmitted him to posterity among the first favourites of the English Muse.'[2] Locke praised him ; and Dr. Watts thought that the success achieved by him had triumphantly confuted all theories of the impracticability of a worthy treatment in English poetry of Christian subjects.[3] Molineux, a friend of Locke, even went so far as to declare that 'all our English poets except Milton, have been ballad-makers in comparison with him.'[4] It may be added that his first epic, that of 'Prince Arthur,' was decidedly popular, passing in two years through three editions.

No doubt the comparative popularity which Blackmore attained is one among many signs of the decadence of poetical taste which had set in soon after the middle of the seventeenth century. His style is almost always heavy and careless. Sometimes he becomes insufferably tedious and

[1] *Spectator*, No. 339.
[2] Johnson's *Lives of the Poets*, ii. 257.
[3] J. Watts's Pref. to *Horæ Lyricæ*.
[4] Hearne's *Reliquiæ*, iii. 163.

prosaic[1] to an extent which more than justified the keenest banter of his opponents. Nevertheless the wits did not do him justice. They had no wish to be fair to him. He had inveighed with all his might, not only against the immoralities of the stage, but against the general profanity and levity on serious or sacred subjects which so frequently disgraced the literature of his time. And consequently he made many enemies among a race of men than whom none were more skilled in barbing and polishing the epigrams which sufficed for years to come to preserve his name to ridicule. Meanwhile, his works were not unvalued by a different class of readers. The poems which proceeded from his pen supplied, with all their faults, a deficiency which could not be satisfied by the sharp-witted writers who held them up to scorn. From its earliest infancy poetry has ever been the favourite channel through which the diviner faculty in man endeavours to find utterance. All the best poetry in the world, and that which has most touched the hearts of men, has been either suffused with a certain mystical and spiritual element, or at all events has appealed to the deeper strings of our moral nature. It is untrue to the best sources of its inspiration if it is content for long together merely to sport, as it were, upon the surface of things; still more so if it becomes flippant, unspiritual, immoral. During the period that followed upon the Restoration this had been notoriously the prevailing character of English verse. And therefore among the more sober-minded of the educated community there were numbers who were heartily ready to greet, with an applause much more than proportionate to its intrinsic worth, a more

[1] What gleam of poetic feeling could be anticipated in a writer who could drone as follows? (The passage comes from his *Paraphrase of Job*, chap. xiii.)

> 'Since you are pleasèd oft to enumerate
> God's wise and mighty works in this debate,
> I the same method have observed, to show
> That I his wonders know, no less than you.
> I do not your prolix discourses want,
> To prove those truths divine, I freely grant.'
>
> Sir R. Blackmore's *Paraphrases*, &c., ed. 1716, p. 56.

Some, however, of his paraphrases, as that of the 103rd Psalm, are by no means wanting in spirit.

healthy strain. They had begun to awaken to the surpassing merits of the 'Paradise Lost;' and though the interval which separated a Milton from a Sir Richard Blackmore was wide beyond all comparison, they were all the better able to appreciate a more serious and reflective style of verse than they had of late been used to. They could welcome a very pedestrian muse in whom they discerned sincerity and graver thought, in preference to one clad in the conventional garments and flaunting colours which had been fashionable. This may serve partly to explain the toleration that was extended to Blackmore's dulness.

His writings were also in harmony with the general tone of thought which was being gradually formed in reference to the graver subjects of human contemplation. Poetry far superior to his in spiritual power and in imaginative ability, would have fallen flat upon the ears of a prosaic generation which preferred to discuss its relations to the infinite from an altogether argumentative and 'common sense' point of view. Moreover, it was an age very devoid of poetical originality. Some affected to follow the French style; some made Pindar their model; some, Virgil and the Epic poets; others imitated Horace. As for Blackmore, he set himself in his 'Creation,' to emulate Lucretius [1] in the character of a Christian philosopher. He wished, he said, to make argument agreeable, and to adorn it with the harmony of numbers; [2] but where his object was mainly to instruct and reason, the ornaments of poetic eloquence were not to be expected.

Few names connected with the poetical literature of England in the eighteenth century are more familiar than that of *Parnell*. His story of 'The Hermit' is as well known as anything in the English language. Nor is its popularity in any way undeserved. Hume, in his 'Essay on Simplicity and Refinement,' said in reference to this poem that 'it is sufficient to run over Cowley once, but Parnell, after the fifteenth reading, is as fresh as at the first.' [3] His poetry in general has always given pleasure by the melody of its diction, and its polished but unaffected gracefulness. [4] Parnell

[1] Preface to his poem on Creation. [2] Id.

[3] Quoted in Mitford's *Life and Works of Parnell*, p. 54.

[4] Campbell was a great admirer of Parnell. He praised 'the correct and

was a clergyman, a man of warm, impulsive temperament; too fond, it was said, of social indulgences; but generous, benevolent, and a most delightful companion. He retained to the last the affectionate attachment of Pope, whose friendships were generally capricious and somewhat dangerous; and his intimate acquaintance was much valued by other eminent men of literature, such as Addison and Steele, Swift and Arbuthnot. His works, which were all written between 1706 and his death in 1717, include a fair proportion of sacred poems. These—putting out of the question his uninteresting studies of Scripture characters—share in the sweet simplicity which gives the charm to his best verses on other subjects. They bear the stamp of his general character; deficient in depth and fulness, but susceptible and ardent. His versification, smooth and easy as it is, is often injured by the too ready admission of seven-syllable lines among those of eight.

The verses on Scriptural and other sacred subjects, which are interspersed among the works of *Matthew Prior* (1664–1721), are worthy of only very slight notice. 'His serious poetry,' says Hazlitt, 'is as heavy as his familiar style is light and agreeable.'[1] 'Solomon on the Vanity of the World,' a poem in blank verse in three books, although the most studied and elaborate of all his productions, is very unreadable. The paraphrase of 'St. Paul's Description of Charity' has a few good lines, but is not remarkable, and is not by any means equal to a similar one by Bishop Ken. His ode on the words 'I am that I am,' written when he was quite a young man, is chiefly notable for the falsetto of its exaggerated intellectual humility—

> Then down with all thy boasted volumes, down—
> Only reserve the sacred one:

words which would have come consistently from the mouth of one of the earlier race of Particular Baptists, but were very absurd and unreal as spoken by Prior.

equable sweetness . . . the select choice of his expression, the clearness and keeping of his imagery, and the pensive dignity of his moral feeling.'—*Essay on English Poets*, quoted by Cunningham in Johnson's *Lives*, ii. 93. 'The compass,' he elsewhere says, 'is not extensive, but its tone is peculiarly delightful.'—T. Campbell, *Specimens of English Poetry*, iv. 62.

[1] W. Hazlitt, *Lectures on the English Poets*, 142.

An 'Ode to the Creator,' by *John Hughes* (1677–1720), one of the contributors to the 'Spectator,' has sometimes been highly praised. But there is far too much in it of the grand, conventional style, too much straining after effect, too much self-consciousness on the part of the writer. It is very unequal in depth of thought and feeling to a poem from which he has evidently borrowed several of his ideas, that of Norris 'On the Creation.' A similar remark may be made of 'The Ecstacy,' the principal idea of which closely resembles that which the author just named has embodied in 'The Elevation.' Both imagine the soul passing in rapturous contemplation through infinities of space upward to the presence of God. There is a stanza in Hughes not wanting in a certain kind of grandeur:

> And lo! again the nations downward fly,
> And wide-stretch'd kingdoms perish from my eye.
> Heaven! what bright visions now arise!
> What opening worlds my ravish'd sense surprise!
> I pass cærulean gulfs, and now behold
> New solid globes their weight, self-balanc'd, bear,
> Unpropt amid the fluid air,
> And all around the central sun in circling eddies roll'd.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> And now once more I downward cast my sight,
> When lo! the earth, a larger moon, displays
> Far off, amid the heavens, her silver face,
> And to her sister moon by turns gives light!
> Her seas are shadowy spots, her land a milky white.[1]

Compare this with Norris:

> Take wing, my soul, and upwards bend thy flight
> To thy originary fields of light.
> Here's nothing, nothing here below
> That can deserve thy longer stay;
> A secret whisper bids thee go
> To purer air, and beams of native day.
> Th' ambition of the tow'ring lark outvie,
> And, like him, sing as thou dost upwards fly.
>
> How all things lessen which my soul before
> Did with the grovelling multitude adore!

[1] 'Ode to the Creator.'—Poems, *B. Poets*, vii. 330.

Those pageant glories disappear
Which charm and dazzle mortals' eyes:
How do I in this higher sphere,
How do I mortals with their joys despise!
Pure uncorrupted element I breathe,
And pity their gross atmosphere beneath.[1]

Both are fine. But there is a spiritual power in the Christian Platonism of Norris, which is deficient in the more material conceptions of Hughes. To unite with the ideal notion of the ecstatic flight of the soul, 'a short view of the heavens according to the modern philosophy,' was a combination which needed a more masterly hand than his to treat successfully.

The following verses by *Elizabeth Thomas* (1675–1730), the 'Corinna' of Dryden, are of some interest, both in themselves and from the circumstances under which they were written. She had been brought up a rigid Calvinist. But reflection on the inscrutable mysteries of predestination and free-will perplexed and distressed her. When Burnet's 'Exposition of the Articles' was in the press, in the last year of the seventeenth century, she waited eagerly for its publication, hoping to find in it some solution of her difficulties. It was with great disappointment that she found there little more than an impartial statement of different opinions. The lines here quoted, which she very often afterwards repeated to herself to confirm and tranquillise her faith, were thereupon written as the expression of a resignation to which she only attained after much mental struggle and many self-reasonings:—

Ah! strive no more to know what fate
Is preordained for thee:
'Tis vain in this my mortal state,—
For Heaven's inscrutable decree
Will only be reveal'd in vast Eternity.
Then, O my soul!
Remember thy celestial birth,
And live to Heaven while here on earth:
Thy God is infinitely true—
All justice, yet all mercy too.

[1] Norris, J., *Poems*, 101.

To Him, then, through thy Saviour pray
For grace to guide thee on thy way,
And give thee will to do.
But humbly, for the rest, my soul!
Let Hope and Faith the limits be
Of thy presumptuous curiosity.[1]

It is a great tribute to the merit of *Addison's* hymns, that though there are only five of them they should be so universally known. They are marked alike by the pure and tranquil tone of his piety, and by the polished simplicity of his style. On either of these accounts, however, they have sometimes been thought unsatisfactory by one or another class of readers. Although elevation, and even fervour of religious feeling, is by no means wanting in them, they have sometimes been complained of,[2] as by Wesley and his followers, as deficient in what they have called 'unction.' On the other ground, the simplicity of their language often seemed like mere plainness to tastes which had been used to a more adorned and lyrical style of poetry. To be properly appreciated, they should be read as when they first appeared, during the summer and autumn of 1712, in the Saturday numbers of the 'Spectator.' The delightful little homilies by which they were introduced, and of which they formed a part, throw a clearer light both upon their general character, and upon the impression they left upon the public mind. In the first,[3] headed by the familiar lines from Horace—

Si fractus illabatur orbis,
Impavidum ferient ruinæ—

Addison discourses to his readers on the fearless and cheerful confidence with which a good man, amid the cares and accidents of life, reposes in the love and wisdom of an Almighty helper. 'The hope, the patience, the manful spirit, which such trust inspires, is truly its own reward, independently of the duty of faith and the supernatural blessing which accompanies it. Above all, what comfort to the soul 'hovering in the last moments of its separation, when it is just

[1] Dyce's *British Poetesses*, 156.
[2] Cf. C. B. Pearson in *Oxford Essays*, 1858, 142.
[3] *Spectator*, No. 441.

entering on another state of existence, to converse with scenes and objects and companions that are altogether new. What can support her under such tremblings of thought, such fears, such anxiety, such apprehensions, but the casting of all her cares upon Him who first gave her being, who has conducted her through one stage of it, and will always be with her, to guide and comfort her in her progress through eternity?' And then remarking how beautifully this reliance upon God is represented by David in the 23rd Psalm, he concludes the paper by his well-known version of it, 'The Lord my pasture shall prepare.'

The second[1] is upon gratitude—no difficult virtue, but one in which every generous mind feels pleasure. But if so, it should exalt the soul to rapture, when employed upon the great object of all gratitude, the giver of all our blessings. Greek and Latin poets constantly employed their talents in celebrating the praises of their Deities; yet 'our idea of the Supreme Being is infinitely more great and noble than what could possibly enter into the heart of a heathen.' The Jews have set us a magnificent example of divine poetry; he could wish the Christian world would follow it. He then gives his readers the hymn beginning, 'When all thy mercies, O my God!'

The third[2] is upon the means to be used for the strengthening of faith. His first recommendation is, that when by reading a discourse a person is thoroughly convinced of the truth of any article, and the reasonableness of belief in it, he should never afterwards suffer himself to call it in question. It is an axiom in all science not to keep re-examining principles or arguments, upon the truth of which we have once been satisfied; in religion it is a necessary rule to prevent perpetual vacillation and perplexity. When Latimer grew old he could no longer trust his memory for reasons, but was wisely content to repeat before his questioners the articles of the faith in which he had long before made up his mind to live and die. He advises, however, secondly, that they who are competent to do so should always keep in memory, ready at hand, the arguments that had appeared strongest to them. Thirdly, he dwells upon the mutual strength which faith and

[1] *Spectator*, No. 453. [2] Id. No. 465.

the active practice of morality derive from one another. Fourthly, and above all, he insists upon the power of habitual adoration. 'The devout man does not only believe, but feels there is a Deity. He has actual sensations of him.' Lastly he discourses on the value of retirement, and of the contemplations of God in the power and wisdom of his works. After citing, in reference to this, a remarkable passage from Aristotle, he repeats the Psalmist's words, 'The heavens declare the glory of God,' and concludes with his hymn, beginning 'The spacious firmament on high.'[1]

In the fourth,[2] alluding to a previous paper, in which greatness had been spoken of as a principal element in stirring the imagination, he remarks how often his imagination had been kindled, and ideas of the glorious majesty of God suggested to him, by the vastness and grandeur of the sea, even in a calm, still more when heaving with a tempest. He had read many accounts in the old poets of storms at sea, but none, to his mind, were equal in sublimity to that in the Psalm which tells of those who see the works of the Lord and his wonders on the deep. Nor did he speak without experience. He had felt the blessing of faith and prayer amid the terrors of a great storm. The hymn that follows—'How are thy servants blessed, O Lord,' 'made by a gentleman at the conclusion of his travels,' was the expression of his own devout gratitude on the occasion when he narrowly escaped from shipwreck off the Coast of Liguria.

The last[3] of the five papers, in which Addison clothed a part of his meditations in sacred verse, is shaped in the form of a letter from the worthy clergyman who had been represented as one of that circle of intimate friends of which the 'Spectator' himself, Sir Roger de Coverley, and Will Honeycomb were principal members. He has been, he says, and still is seriously ill, and his thoughts are often employed in meditating on the great change to which he feels that he

[1] Dr. Johnson was exceedingly fond of this hymn, and used to repeat it with a face beaming with enthusiasm. Hartley Coleridge liked it the least of Addison's hymns. 'I cannot away,' he said, 'with the "spangles" and the "shining frame." They remind me of tambour work. Perhaps if I had never read the Psalm, I might think the verses fine.'—*Essays and Marginalia*, ii. 71.

[2] *Spectator*, No. 489. [3] Id. No. 513.

may be drawing near. He quotes, at length, a striking passage from Sherlock's 'Treatise on Death;' and then, dwelling in a few impressive words on his Christian faith being his one only support, he adds the hymn which he had composed during his sickness, 'When rising from the bed of death.'

It will be readily understood that the effect and popularity of Addison's hymns were immensely enhanced by the manner in which they appeared. Dr. Drake, in his edition of 'The English Essayists of the Last Century,' quotes the remark of a contemporary writer, that 'all the pulpit discourses of a year scarce produced half the good as flowed from the "Spectator" of one day.' Extreme as this over-statement is—as the suppression of all preaching for a few months would have quickly shown—no doubt there was much truth in it so far as regarded a very great number of the readers of the 'Spectator.' We are told by Budgell that 20,000 numbers were sometimes sold in one day; and as each paper passed on an average through several hands, the circulation must be considered as something wholly unparalleled in that age. Thoughts upon religion as well as upon morality, treated in a popular and attractive form, were brought into the homes and to the hearts of thousands who had long been comparative strangers to such reflections. There cannot be the least doubt that Addison's hymns, introduced as they were so aptly, and in terms so well fitted to appeal to the deeper feeling of Englishmen, clung to the memory of admiring readers to a greater extent than could have been expected from their intrinsic merit.

That merit, however, is by no means inconsiderable. They were never meant for congregational singing, and though some of them are often found in collections intended for this purpose, they are out of place there. But there is none the less a deep vein in them of pure and devout piety. Mr. George Macdonald, while acknowledging the charm which he finds in that hymn, especially, upon 'the spacious firmament on high,' fancies nevertheless that he sees in it 'a sign of the poetic times: a flatness of spirit, arising from the evanishment of the mystical element, begins to result in a worship of power.' The hymn, he adds, is good, yet 'like the

loveliness of the red and lowering west, it gives sign of a grey and cheerless dawn, under whose dreariness the child will first doubt if his father loves him, and next doubt if he has a father at all, and is not a mere foundling that nature has lifted from her path.'[1] There would have been more force in these remarks, suggestive as they are, if Addison had written no other hymns than that which Mr. Macdonald has mainly in his mind. It is true that in all his writings there is a certain sobriety and reserve in his treatment of devotional subjects which not unfrequently gives almost an appearance of frigidity. Thus, God is nearly always spoken of as 'the Supreme Being.' This was owing partly to the general character of the papers among which they appeared, but in great measure also to the tone of Addison's mind. And yet it is perfectly clear that he was as strongly persuaded of the reality of that immediate intuition of God on the part of the believer, which is the root principle of all mysticism, and of a direct Divine influence upon the soul, as those who have expressed the same belief in the most rapturous terms of enthusiasm.[2] The poetical motto which is intended to sound the keynote of the Essay in which the last of his hymns is introduced, is the line from Virgil—

Afflata est numine quando
Jam propiore Dei,

with Dryden's translation of it,

When all the god came rushing on her soul.

Nor could the sense of a direct contact of the spirit of man with Deity be more earnestly expressed than in those two fine lines in which he called to mind his communion with a higher power in an hour of great peril:—

Whilst in the confidence of prayer,
My soul took hold on Thee.

A passing reference is due in this paper to the famous soliloquy in 'Cato.' It may rank with sacred poetry, as worthily as the comparative purification of the stage which

[1] *England's Antiphon*, 279.
[2] Cp. Al. Knox, *Remains*, iii. 343.

Addison's influence effected is worthy to be classed among his best deeds as a Christian moralist.

Pope was only to a very limited extent a writer of sacred poetry in the stricter meaning of the expression. 'Vital spark of heavenly flame,' the ambition of village choirs in old days,[1] was written in 1712. He had commented in a letter to Steele [2] on the well-known *Animula vagula*, &c. of Hadrian, and was requested in return to compose an ode upon them, in two or three stanzas, which might be set to music.[3] Pope complied, borrowing largely from the 'Thought of Death,' by Flatman, a barrister, poet, and painter, who had died in 1688, the year Pope was born.[4] The verses from which the original idea was taken had been curiously characteristic of the dying emperor, the conflicting elements in whose varied character—'his earnestness and his levity, his zeal for knowledge and frivolity in appreciating it, his patient endurance and restless excitability,'[5] are all reflected in the lines with which he beguiled the later moments of a painful and lingering malady. Pope's ode cannot be called even a free paraphrase of the words by which it was suggested; it is simply a rendering of the general idea in a Christian sense. Yet it retains a good deal of the artificial tone which was perhaps almost inevitable in transferring, even with great alterations, to a Christian, in his most solemn hour, words so deeply stamped with the thought and special character of the dying Roman. It is, however, by no means unworthy of the repute it gained.

The sacred eclogue, entitled the 'Messiah,' appeared first in the 'Spectator' for May 14, 1712. More authors than one [6] have remarked upon what has been aptly called its 'flamboyant' style, by which it contrasts most unfavourably with the sublime simplicity of Isaiah. Wordsworth refers to it as a special example of 'what is usually called poetic diction,' as compared with the genuine language of poetry.[7]

Pope is said to have translated the famous hymn of Francis Xavier: 'O Deus, ego amo Te' ('My God, I love

[1] C. B. Pearson in *Oxford Essays*, 1858, 161. [2] *Spectator*, No. 532.
[3] Miller's 'On Hymns,' quoted in F. Saunders' *Evenings with the Sacred Poets*, 290. [4] Id.
[5] C. Merivale's *Hist. of the Romans under the Empire*, 1862, vii. 490.
[6] F. Saunders' *Evenings*, &c., 291. G. Macdonald's *England's Antiphon*, 285.
[7] W. Wordsworth. Appendix to Poems 'On Poetic Diction,' v. 193, 1850.

Thee not because'), but it does not exist among his published works.[1] He appears to have had the first verse of it in mind when he wrote in 'The Universal Prayer:'—

> What conscience dictates to be done,
> Or warns me not to do—
> This, teach me more than hell to shun,
> That more than heaven pursue.

The verse and the sentiment which it contains is a noble one. Nevertheless the transition is as strong as it is characteristic, from the fervid personal devotion of the great Spanish missionary to the measured 'What conscience dictates' of the renowned eighteenth-century poet.

Pope wrote little sacred verse; but his special aim was to be a writer of ethical poetry,[2] with an ethical system based upon the strongest foundations of religion. The design of the 'Essay on Man' approached very nearly to that of a sacred poem. Milton, in the solemn prelude to his great work, implores the illumining aid of the Holy Spirit—

> That to the height of this great argument
> I may assert eternal Providence,
> And justify the ways of God to men.[3]

Pope echoes these words, and quotes the last line as the express purpose of his own undertaking.[4] Somerville, in his enthusiastic encomium upon the Essay, can hardly be said to have overstated the aspirations of the writer of it.

> Be it thy task to set the wanderer right,
> Point out her way in her aërial flight;
> Her noble mien, her honours lost, restore,
> And bid her deeply think and proudly soar.
> Thy theme sublime and easy verse will prove
> Her high descent and mission from above.

[1] C. Butler's *Historical Memoirs*, qu. by C. B. Pearson in *Oxford Essays*, 1858, 137.

[2] 'Pope's predilection for ethical poetry grew on him. . . . In his last illness he compared himself to Socrates, dispensing his morality among his friends just as he was dying.'—J. Conington (on the poetry of Pope), *Oxford Essay* 1858, 47.

[3] *Paradise Lost*, i. 24. [4] *Essay on Man*, c. 16.

Let others now translate; thy abler pen
Shall vindicate the ways of God to men;
In virtue's cause shall gloriously prevail,
When the bench frowns in vain, and pulpits fail,
Made wise by thee, whose happy style conveys
The purest morals in the softest lays,
As angels once, so now we mortals bold
Shall climb the ladder Jacob viewed of old;
Thy kind reforming muse shall lead the way
To the bright regions of eternal day.[1]

The opinion of the clever hunting squire by whom these lines were written may not in itself be sufficient to establish that Pope had proposed to himself any such lofty object; but it clearly shows that the Essay was regarded by some intelligent readers of his time as worthily accomplishing the high purpose which the author of it had laid down—the vindication of a Divine providence overruling all human affairs.

It is not within the scope of this chapter to enter closely into the real character of the 'Essay on Man.' There is the less reason for doing so, as the subject has been ably discussed by some of the best writers of our day. It must not, however, be passed over entirely.

Pope's Essay met the taste of the age. The principles of natural religion were being discussed by men of all views in every educated circle—it may be rather said, in every place of public resort where men conversed and reasoned. Fundamental questions relating to the nature of the Divine attributes, the origin and cause of evil, the objects of human society, were exciting profound attention among all who advanced any pretensions to serious thought.[2] In the great controversy between Deists and the defenders of revealed religion they were being perpetually recurred to. A philosophical poem, therefore, on these subjects, proceeding from a poet whose talents were held in universal honour, was received with the most cordial welcome. But before the chorus of applause which greeted its first appearance had yet died away, the question was already asked, how far it redeemed the lofty promise of its exordium. Was not its tendency

[1] W. Somerville's *Poems*: 'To the Author of the Essay on Man.'
[2] See Pattison's introduction to his ed. of the *Essay on Man*, 4.

rather a downward than an upward one? Did not its conclusions lead rather to scepticism, or to fatalism, than to a secure and reasonable faith? Pope was startled and disturbed to find that such an interpretation could be put upon his poem, and gladly availed himself of the powerful championship of Warburton. The truth is, he had entered upon a task unfitted to his genius, and far too deep for him. He had intended, in a train of reasoning none the less philosophical for its poetical form, to grapple with difficulties which are as old as the reason of mankind, and, in doing so, to smooth the way of religion, and strengthen the foundations of morality. His labours had resulted in a poem, rich indeed in brilliant passages, and fascinating by the polished condensation of its periods; but essentially vague and superficial, and open to very different constructions, according as the mind of the reader filled up for itself the gaps and deficiencies in the thought of the writer. 'Pope,' says Taine, 'is a poet if read in fragments.'[1] Much the same may be said of his philosophy. Where each separate idea is stated so effectively, it is at first difficult to realise that the solidity of the whole reasoning does not in any way correspond with the pointed impressiveness of the details.

Yet the poem might have been a very noble one, if Pope had had the will and the power to carry out in a religious and meditative spirit the plan originally suggested to him. Bolingbroke seems to have pressed him to write an essay in verse upon the objects and destinies of human life, but to have advised that he should treat the subject not so much from an argumentative as from a poetical and imaginative point of view. 'The business,' he said, 'of the philosopher is to dilate, . . . to press, to prove, to convince: and that of the poet to hint, to touch his subject with short and spirited strokes, to warm the affections, and to speak to the heart.'[2] But Pope had far too much in common with his 'guide, philosopher, and friend' to carry out the project with success. Although a steady believer in the grand truths of revelation,[3]

[1] Taine, H., *Hist. de la Litt. Anglaise*, b. iii. chap. vii. 4.

[2] Bolingbroke to Swift. Quoted by J. Conington, in *Oxford Essays*, 1858, p. 44.

[3] *Q. Rev.* 32, 310.

yet, as Hazlitt remarks, 'he was in poetry what the sceptic was in religion.'[1] He was critical and wholly unimpassioned; he lacked enthusiasm; there is no depth of feeling; no grandeur of sentiment; no imàginative power in anything he ever wrote. His special talents were great, but they were not of the kind which the task proposed to him specially demanded. The sound common sense, the keen observation of manners and character, the epigrammatic wit, the finished style, the harmonious flow of numbers, were all insufficient for such an undertaking. To all appearance he scarcely knew in what consisted the less obvious difficulties of his subject, what fires of world-old controversies lay smouldering under the ground over which he lightly trod, or what unsuspected conclusions might be drawn from the argument by which, with satisfaction to himself, he established the optimism of nature. His poem, even in its religious aspect, must not be unduly disparaged. There must have been very considerable merits in a work which was not only widely acceptable at a time when a too prudential system of religion generally prevailed, but which Kant and Dugald Stewart praised,[2] and which Toplady, most Calvinistic of the Evangelicals, quoted with the utmost approbation.[3] Only it was insufficient,[4] like much else that Pope wrote, both on its theoretic and on its emotional side.[5] Before the end of the eighteenth century, the time had come when this was felt, not only by those who had been brought up in that more meditative school of thought, of which men like Coleridge and Wordsworth were representatives, but by thousands who could have given little reason for the distaste into which Pope's poems had fallen, except the practical one that they were not what they wanted. 'People still go to see Pope's house at Twickenham,' said Chateaubriand, of the years 1792–1800, and pick sprays of the weeping willow which he planted; but his renown, like

[1] W. Hazlitt, *Lectures on the English Poets*, 94. [2] Pattison, p. 11.

[3] Toplady's *Works*, 1825.—'Christian and Philos. Necessity Asserted,' vol. 6, 84.

[4] Yet a writer in the *Quarterly Rev.* remarks fairly enough, "For the contradictions and semisophistries of these striking essays the amazing difficulties of the subject should be rather held accountable than the poet.'—*Q. Rev.* July, 1862, 154.

[5] Pattison, p. 9.

his willow, is a good deal decayed.'[1] In our day his merits and his defects alike are probably far more justly appreciated than they were either in his own age, or in that which immediately preceded our own.

Gay wrote one or two short poems on semi-sacred subjects, a 'Night Contemplation' and a 'Thought on Eternity;' but they are scarcely worthy of further notice. They are written stiffly. He was far more at home in writing fables to pleasant, easy verse. He was a man of amiable temper and blameless morals. But what sacred poetry could be looked for from a man who in his last illness could seriously desire (though it may have been in a despondent moment) to have placed over his remains the flippant epitaph:—

> Life is a jest, and all things show it;
> I thought so once, but now I know it.[2]

Tickell should be mentioned in this chapter on account of his elegy[3] on his friend Addison. Dr. Johnson said of it that 'there was no more sublime or elegant funeral poem in our English literature.'[4] Lord Macaulay bestows upon it no less praise. 'It unites,' he says, 'the energy and magnificence of Dryden to the tenderness and purity of Cowper,' and 'would do honour to the greatest name in our literature.'[5]

William Broome (1687–1745), a clergyman in the Eastern Counties, who seems to have been much respected, left a few poems on Scriptural subjects, which may be found with his other works in the collections of English poetry. There are lines in his 'Thoughts on the Death of my dear Friend Elijah Fenton,' which would well deserve to be quoted, if the whole piece had not been obviously framed upon the general model of Tickell's elegy. In truth, he was too much of an imitator ever to emerge from the lower ranks of the minor poets. His paraphrase, however, of Habakkuk iii. is by no means wanting in vigour. The following verses form part of it:—

[1] *Essai sur la Litt. Angl.*, ii. 273. [2] *B. Poets*, viii. 261.

[3] It contains the fine lines in Westminster Abbey beginning,

> 'Here let me pace the gloomy aisles alone.'

[4] *Lives of the Poets*, ii. 325.

[5] Macaulay's *Essays*, 'Life and Writings of Addison.'

But why, ah! why, O Sion, reigns
Wide-wasting havock o'er thy plains?
Ah me! destruction is abroad!
Vengeance is loose, and wrath from God!
See! hosts of spoilers seize their prey!
See! slaughter marks in blood his way!
See! how embattled Babylon
Like an unruly deluge rushes on!

Yet though the fig-tree should no burthen bear,
Though figs delude the promise of the year;
Yet though the olive should not yield her oil,
Nor the parch'd glebe reward the peasant's toil;
Though the tir'd ox beneath his labours fall,
And herds in millions perish from the stall,
Yet shall my grateful strings,
For ever praise thy name,
For ever thee proclaim,
Thee everlasting God, the mighty King of kings.[1]

Aaron Hill (1685–1750) was a man of much study, varied accomplishments, and multitudinous employments, among which was the managership of Drury Lane Theatre. His poetry, though much praised by almost all literary contemporaries,[2] has not maintained the repute it once possessed. No doubt it shows much original power, but it is often somewhat affected, and sometimes turgid. Sceptical in many of his opinions, he was yet by no means wanting in religious feeling. He not unfrequently chose Scriptural subjects. As Prior had written a long poem on Solomon, and Parnell on Moses and David, so he wrote an epic in ten books, and in varied metres, on Gideon. His verses on the Judgment Day, which may be compared with those of Pomfret, Prior, and Watts, are very much wanting in real solemnity, but have something of the wild fantastic grandeur which characterises Martin's pictures. The version of David's Elegy on Saul and Jonathan is good, and keeps close to the original; others, however, of his paraphrases, as of the 104th Psalm, and of the song of Moses, have too much straining after effect, too

[1] *B. Poets*, viii. 752.

[2] As by Bolingbroke, Pope, Chesterfield, Thomson, Richardson, Mallet, Savage, &c.

much that reminds of stage action, to be pleasing. He also rendered into verse part of the Sermon on the Mount, an attempt which could hardly be so successful as to escape an air of being, if not irreverent, at all events out of place. His best verses are contained in that which is also his most sceptical poem, 'The Religion of Reason.' It exhibits a man in the midst of doubt, in any case 'undoubting God,' and waiting in suspense:

> Until at last,
> Death opening truth's barr'd gate, 'tis time to see
> God's meanings—in the light his presence lends.[1]

Christopher Pitt (1699–1748), who used to be well known as the translator of Virgil's Æneid, and whom Hervey calls 'the famous Mr. Pitt of New College,'[2] was the author of some paraphrases of part of the Book of Job, and of some of the Psalms. The following is, on the whole, a favourable example. It is from the seventh, eighth, and ninth verses of the 144th Psalm:—

> Extend thy hand, thou kind, all gracious God,
> Down from the heaven of heavens, thy bright abode,
> And shield me from my foes, whose towering pride
> Lowers like a storm, and gathers like a tide:
> Against strange children vindicate my cause,
> Who curse thy name, and trample on thy laws;
> Who fear not vengeance which they never felt,
> Train'd to blaspheme, and eloquent in guilt:
> Their hands are impious, and their deeds profane,
> They plead their boasted innocence in vain.
> Thy name shall dwell for ever on my tongue
> And guide the sacred numbers of my song.
>
> . . . . .
>
> The hallow'd theme shall teach me how to sing,
> Swell on the lyre, and tremble on the string.[3]

[1] *B. Poets*, viii. 731.

[2] 'Meditation among the Tombs.' *Works*, vi. 267.

[3] *B. Poets*, viii. 612. The last verses savour of that characteristic bane of eighteenth-century verse, the aspiring to the artificial graces of 'poetic diction.' The two lines omitted are worse,—

> 'To thee my muse shall consecrate her lays,
> And every note shall labour in thy praise.'

Yet it is not worse than Pope's 'Nymphs of Solyma.'

But it is full time to recur to the opening years of the century, and remark on the condition of congregational hymnody at that time.

The New Version was in most churches first beginning to supplant the old. It had been allowed 'by the Court at Kensington'[1]—the only authority upon which it rests—in 1696. *Nahum Tate* (1652–1715), a year or two after succeeded Shadwell as Court Poet. His personal character was not of a kind to do great credit, either to his Laureate office, or to his yet higher function as chief hymnist to the Church of England. 'He was a good-natured, fuddling companion,' says Southey, quoting from Oldys, 'and his latter days were spent in the Mint as a refuge from his creditors.'[2] He wrote some dramas of no great note, and was an accomplice with Shadwell in 'improving upon' King Lear and others of Shakspeare's plays; an offence, of which it must be said in extenuation, that Otway, Davenant, and Dryden, had done the same.[3] *Nicholas Brady* (1659–1716), his associate in versifying the Psalms, had been an active promoter of the Revolution, and was basking in royal favour as chaplain to the King and Queen. He was also rector of the two benefices of Clapham and Richmond.

It was not without a long struggle, which lasted in fact well into the present century, that Sternhold and Hopkins were at length fairly superseded, either by the New Version or by the later hymns. Their composition was supported not only by the strong Conservatism of the Church, but by the deliberate authority of many men of ability and weight. Bishop Bull greatly preferred it to the one that had recently come in; and his voice was constantly heard by his family very early in the morning or late at night, singing the familiar Psalms.[4] Bishop Beveridge was quite of the same opinion. He thought it purer and plainer English, and that it kept nearer to the text.[5] Hearne spoke with disgust of the 'intolerable alterations' that had been made, especially in the

[1] C. B. Pearson, in *Oxford Essays*, 1858, 121.
[2] Southey, *Later English Poets*, i. 173. [3] *Qu. Rev.* 35, 186–7.
[4] R. Nelson's *Life of Bull*, 61.
[5] 'Defence of the Book of Psalms,' &c., 1710, quoted in Nelson's *Life Bull*, 62.

change of fine English Saxon words for new-fangled phrases.[1] Bishop Horsley also defended it as a just and dignified rendering of the Psalms.[2] And in country places more especially, where few could read, it was no light matter to set aside words which, wedded to their own tunes, had been known by rote for what—going back as it did to the earlier years of the Reformation—must have seemed like time immemorial. For a long time, therefore, yet to come, a great number, perhaps the bulk, of rustic congregations continued well satisfied with the psalmody they had learnt from their fathers; and of many a pious village home it might be said in Shenstone's words,—

> Here oft the dame, on Sabbath's decent eve,
> Hymnèd such Psalms as Sternhold forth did mete;
> If winter 't were, she to her hearth did cleave,
> But in her garden found a summer seat;
> Sweet melody! to hear her then repeat
> How Israel's sons, beneath a foreign king,
> While taunting foemen did a song entreat,
> All, for the nonce, untuning every string,
> Uphang their useless lyres—small heart had they to sing.[3]

Yet notwithstanding use and association, and all else that could be said in favour of the Old Version, it was evidently full time that there should be some great improvement in Church psalmody. This had sunk to a very low ebb, and it was long before it began to revive. The Old Version, with the exception of that of the 100th Psalm, which was not by Sternhold and Hopkins at all, nor by their regular coadjutors, but by Kethe, an exile with Knox at Geneva in 1555,[4] has very few real merits, and these, such as they are, not of a kind which society in the time of Queen Anne, or of the Georges, would readily appreciate. Among town congregations, therefore, it had fallen into general contempt. Robert Nelson, while reprobating such a pretext, says that not only were there very few who could be prevailed upon to join in psalmody, but that 'the generality of those who are otherwise very serious, excuse themselves from the bad poetry of the

[1] *Reliquiæ Hearnianæ* (Bliss), Oct. 21, 1723.
[2] C. B. Pearson, *O. Essays*, 1858, 124.
[3] Shenstone's *The Schoolmistress*, written 1741.
[4] Saunders' *Evenings with the S. Poets*, 275.

Old Version.[1] The 'dids,' and 'ekes,' and 'ayes,'[2] and other obsolete words and phrases gave great offence[3] to a generation which prided itself upon improved and correct language. Wesley called it 'scandalous doggerel;'[4] Gay ridiculed Blackmore's version by saying that

Sternhold himself he outSternholded.[5]

Watts thought it one chief cause of the 'entire neglect' into which congregational singing had fallen;[6] although, said he in another place, some have got to think that there is danger in anything but 'a dull hymn or two at church in tunes of equal dulness,' and that anything 'that arises a degree or two above Mr. Sternhold is too airy for worship.'[7] The decline of psalmody, wrote Romaine in 1775, 'happened when vital religion began to decay among us, more than a century ago. It was a gradual decay, and went on till at last there was a general complaint against Sternhold and Hopkins. Their translation was treated as poor, flat stuff. The wits ridiculed it; the profane blasphemed it. Good men did not defend it. Then it fell into such contempt that people were ready to receive anything in its room.'[8]

It can scarcely be doubted that the New Version was, upon the whole, a decided improvement upon the older one. It has been much decried; but if psalms only were to be used in church to the exclusion of other hymns, it must form a large proportion of every selection. 'The candid critic,' remarks a well-informed writer of the 'Quarterly Review,' 'who shall have taken the pains to compare the different versions, will entertain no contemptible opinion of Tate and Brady. This version will furnish more stanzas adapted to the purpose of parochial psalmody, if not excellent, yet unobjectionable, than any with which we are acquainted.'[9] Versions and

[1] Nelson's *Life of Bishop Bull*, 1712, p. 62.

[2] *Spectator*, No. 204.

[3] Nelson, as above.

[4] Quoted by Pearson in *Oxford Essays*, 1858, 140.

[5] Gay's *Poems*, 'Verses to be placed under the Picture of England's Arch-poet.'

[6] 'Essay on the Improvement of Psalmody.'—*Works*, 9, 3.

[7] Preface to his *Lyric Poems*.

[8] Romaine's *Essay on Psalmody*, 1775, p. 104.

[9] *Q. Rev.* 38, 31. Among their best may be specified the 19th ('The heavens declare thy glory, Lord'), the 34th ('Through all the changing'), the 42nd ('As pants'), the 51st ('Have mercy'), the 84th ('O God of hosts'), the 100th

paraphrases of Psalms were produced in surprising abundance throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In the Review just referred to a number of them are mentioned, and in some instances, quoted. The list, including those of a somewhat earlier date, contains very great and very little names: Archbishop Parker, Sir Philip Sidney, Lord Bacon, Milton, George Herbert, Sandys, Bishop Hall, Bishop King, Patrick, Rouse, Wither, Sir John Denham, Addison, Ford, Milbourne, Blackmore, Miles Smyth, Goodridge, Barton, Woodford, Watts, Merrick, Mason.[1] To these may be added, in the seventeenth century, King James I., and in the eighteenth, a host of additional names, including Doddridge, Toplady, the three Wesleys, Elizabeth Rowe, Walter Harte, Smart, Darby, Christopher Pitt, Romaine, Bishop Horne. If the list were to include all who had now and then paraphrased a Psalm or two, almost the greater part of the minor poets must be added. Watts, writing in 1707, said that he had seen 'above twenty versions of the Psalter by persons of richer and meaner talents.'[2] A modern writer tells us that 'since the Reformation there have been at least sixty-five musical versions of the whole Book of Psalms, besides legions of less ambitious attempts.'[3] Some of those above enumerated, especially that by George Sandys, are no doubt very superior in poetical merit to the renderings of Tate and Brady. But superior poetical merit is only one of many qualifications for congregational psalmody, and it was not without fair grounds of reason that the New Version, although only 'allowed' by authority, much as Wither's[4] and Blackmore's[5] were, should have firmly established itself, while its rivals all passed into greater or less obscurity.

The New Version, however, did not do much towards a revival of congregational singing. 'Psalmody,' wrote Secker in 1741, 'hath declined of late within most of our memories,

('With one consent'), and the 139th ('Thou, Lord, by strictest search'); also the well-known Christmas hymn, written by Tate in 1712, 'As shepherds watched.'

[1] *Qu. Rev.* 26–32.

[2] 'An Enquiry into the right Way of fitting the Book of Psalms for Christian Worship,' *Works*, 9, 27.

[3] *Fraser's Magazine*, Sept. 1860, 312.

[4] *Oxford Essays*, 1858, 141.

[5] 'Life of Blackmore,' in Anderson's ed. of *B. Poets*, 7, 584.

very unhappily.'[1] And again as Archbishop of Canterbury in 1766:—'Nor will it be a small benefit, if in the course of your liturgical instructions you can persuade the bulk of your congregations to join in the decent use of psalmody, as their forefathers did, instead of the present shameful neglect of it by almost all, and the conceited abuse of it by a few.'[2] On this latter point occasion may be found to make a few remarks in another chapter. It is sufficient here to say that the abuses and negligences which very commonly prevailed in the manner of conducting the singing, were quite as great hindrances to a solemn and instructive style of church music as any deficiencies in the metrical versions which were employed.

In fact, congregational singing had, in the earlier part of the eighteenth century, fallen, through various reasons, into a very discreditable condition, both in the English Church and among Dissenting communities; and reform of some kind or another was ardently desired by all who took any intelligent interest in this important part of public worship. 'In this situation,' writes an earnest champion of psalm-singing in contradistinction to what he called 'human compositions,' 'the hymn-makers find the Church, and they are suffered to thrust out the Psalms to make way for their own compositions, of which they have supplied us with a vast variety, collection upon collection, and in use too, new hymns starting up daily, appendix added to appendix, sung in many congregations, yea admired by very high professors to such a degree that the Psalms are become quite obsolete, and the singing of them is now almost as despicable as it was some time among the profane. I know,' he adds, 'that this is a sore place, and I would touch it gently, as gently as I can with any hope of doing good. The value of poems above psalms is become so great, and the singing of men's words, so as quite to cast out the word of God, is become so universal, except in the Church of England, that one scarce dare speak upon the subject. . . . I blame nobody for singing human compositions. My complaint is against preferring men's poems to the good word of God, and preferring them to it in the Church. I have no

[1] Second Charge as Bishop of Oxford.—Secker's *Eight Charges*, p. 65.

[2] Third Canterbury Charge, Id. 319.

quarrel with Dr. Watts, or with any living or dead versifier. I would not have all their poems burnt. My concern is to see Christian congregations shut out divinely inspired Psalms, and take in Dr. Watts' flights of fancy, as if the words of a poet were better than those of a prophet.'[1]

These words of a good man introduce us to a controversy that has long ago worn itself out, but which once interested and disturbed the minds of many worthy Christian people—the question whether any hymns but those of David, and such others as are taken directly from Scripture, could properly be sung in the worship of the Church. There were some strait Nonconformists who objected to any kind of psalmody. The only Scriptural singing, they said, was from the heart. A strong party among the Baptists did not overcome their scruples on this point till after the middle of the century.[2] Of course there was no such feeling as this in the English Church. And yet the 'Defences of Church Music,' published by Dodwell,[3] by Dr. Bisse,[4] and by G. Payne,[5] and some expressions in the 'Spectator,'[6] seem to show that, owing probably to the very unsatisfactory condition into which congregational singing had fallen, there were many who would willingly have dispensed altogether with the musical part of the service. The extract, however, quoted from Romaine is but one instance among numberless others of a frequent opinion, which may perhaps be traced in every age of the Church until the present one. The hymns of the early Church were many; and some very beautiful ones were composed by some of the most illustrious among its saints. But Chrysostom and others tell us that the Psalms consti-

[1] Romaine's *Essay on Psalmody*, 105-6. In a later edition (1775) of this work, Romaine expunged his severe animadversions on modern hymns. 'We no longer,' said Toplady, 'read of Watts' hymns being Watts' whims.'—(Toplady to Lady H., in *Life and Times of Selina, Countess of Huntingdon*, ii. 66.)—The passage is, however, left both as representing what was for a long time Romaine's own opinion, and also a very common feeling among Churchmen.

[2] Ivimey's *Hist.* ii. 373, and Marlow's 'Discourse against Singing,' quoted in Skeats' *Hist. of the Free Churches*, 92.

[3] Dodwell characteristically dwelt on the power of sacred music in repelling and disabling evil spirits.—Brokesby's *Life*, 359.

[4] Nichols' *Lit. Anecd.* i. 120.

[5] 'Defence of Church Music,'—Sermon at the Anniversary Meeting of the Three Choirs.

[6] *Spectator*, No. 630.

tuted the special, if not the exclusive, hymnody of Christian worship.[1] The use of other hymns, was specially condemned by a Canon of the Council of Laodicea in the fourth century,[2] and was made by St. Augustine a point of accusation against the Donatists.[3] The Canon of Laodicea was repeated twelve centuries later in a decree of the Council of Braganza in 1563.[4] However certain it might be that Christian Churches would not consent to be deprived of the public use of their rich and ever increasing inheritance of sacred song, there was evidently something of a scarcely licensed irregularity in the use of these later hymns. A similar feeling existed to some extent in the Reformed Churches. The improvement of congregational singing was a special object with Wickliffe[5] and later reformers. Yet it was only in Germany that the ferment of religious feeling found any general vent in popular hymns. It may seem strange that translations of them were not largely introduced into England. But the foreign Protestant Churches with which the English reformers were at one time brought into close intercourse, were chiefly Calvinistic, and Calvin was by no means inclined to permit the Psalms to be in the smallest degree supplanted in the churches over which he exercised his dictatorship. He would not absolutely exclude other hymns; 'but,' said he, 'you may search far and near, but you will not find better hymns than those of Holy Scripture.'[6]

The popular hymns, therefore, of the eighteenth century—'collection upon collection, appendix upon appendix'—were altogether a new phenomenon, if not in the Christian Church in general, yet at all events in England. They were caught up at once by large masses of the people; but it cannot be wondered at that they were regarded by many with great suspicion, and often vehemently resisted. It is perfectly needless to recall the arguments by which they were supported or opposed. They maintained their ground, and have fairly won the day. Religion in England owes no insignificant debt

[1] Felix Bovet, *Histoire du Psautier*, p. 14, and Appendix, 207.
[2] The 59th. See Id.
[3] Augustine. Ep. 19; in Id.
[4] Id.
[5] Fraser's *Magazine*, Sept. 1860, 300.
[6] Calvin's Preface to the Liturgy, quoted by Bovet, 207.

to the hymns which the last century produced in such copious abundance. The dissertations by which Watts, Toplady, and others prefaced their hymns, with the object of showing by careful arguments, derived alike from history and reason, that hymns other than those taken from Scripture might lawfully and properly be used in the public services of the Church, have no other interest now, except as memorials of past controversy.

It may be said to be the peculiar privilege of hymn-writers that to a great extent they write, not for any one society of Christians, but for the Church at large. Men whose theological views contrast most strongly meet on common ground when they express in verse the deeper aspirations of the heart, and the voice of Christian praise. *Isaac Watts* (1674–1748), like many others to whom we owe some excellent hymns, was a Dissenter. His father, a deacon of the Independents, had suffered imprisonment for his opinions at a time when toleration was scarcely yet known. Many of our readers may remember a painting, exhibited a few years ago, of the mother suckling her child on the steps of Southampton gaol, within which her husband lay confined. Nonconformity, which at the beginning of the eighteenth century was at about its lowest ebb, may well cherish his memory with gratitude, not only because of his hymns, but because 'his scholarship and his acquaintance with men of letters did much to redeem Dissent from the charge of narrowness and littleness,'[1] and still more, because in days of inertness and indifference he strenuously maintained the better traditions of the old Puritanism. He was a link also between the clergymen whose services had been unhappily lost to the English Church through the Act of Uniformity, and the pious revivalists whose energies failed at length to find scope within her borders in the last century. He had been the intimate friend of John Howe; forty years later he became the friend and adviser of George Whitefield.[2]

His 'Hymns and Spiritual Songs' were published in 1707. 'Give us something better, young man,' had been the reply,[3] when he complained of the want of good hymns; and he had set to work to attempt some remedy for the defect.

[1] Skeats' *H. of the F. Ch.* 256. [2] Id. 257.

[3] F. Saunders' *Evenings with the Sacred Poets*, 283.

His first hymn, published as a sample of what was to come, was upon Revelation v. 9 (a text with which his book was afterwards headed), and was entitled, with that want of religious modesty and taste which was his chief fault, 'A new Song to the Lamb that was Slain.'[1]

Watts' psalms and hymns are of very unequal merit. In the first place, he wrote far too many. Among four hundred hymns, and an almost corresponding bulk of verses in his adaptations of the Psalms, besides 'lyrical poems,' there could not fail to be a great deal that might have been advantageously altered or omitted. But in any case his sacred poetry would have abounded in faults. The strong and narrow dogma of the school of religious thought to which he belonged is sometimes expressed with most repellent harshness. Watts held a most dismal view of human nature. There are passages in his writings which show that he occasionally recoiled from following out his Calvinism to its ultimate consequences. But in his eyes the world was nothing but a dreadful ruin, 'wherein lie millions of rebels against their Creator, under condemnation to misery and death, who are at the same time sick of a mortal distemper, and disordered in their minds even to distraction. . . . Only here and there one attends to the proclamation of grace, and complies with the proposals of peace.'[2] The sufferings of mankind—and he drew a dreadful and exaggerated picture of them—he regarded not as trials, not as wholesome chastisement, but as an imputed curse. 'And,' added he, 'it is most abundant goodness that mankind have any comforts left, and that their miseries are not doubled.'[3] Even children, tender as he was to them, he regarded with a sort of compassionate shudder. 'Cast a glance,' he cried, 'at the sports of children from five to fifteen years of age. What toys and fooleries are these! Would a race of wise and holy beings waste so many years of early life on such wretched trifles?'[4] As for the world, it is 'base as the dirt beneath my feet, And mischievous as hell.'[5]

[1] So also in its opening verse :—

'Prepare new honours for His name
And songs before unknown.'

[2] Watts' *Ruin and Recovery of Mankind*, 89–90. Quoted in J. Wesley *Works*, ix. 375.

[3] Id. p. 73.

[4] Id. p. 80.

[5] Id. ii. 10.

It need hardly be added that the terrors of a future state of punishment lose nothing in horror and hopelessness in Watts' descriptions.

Another great blemish in Watts' hymns is one that has been already partly indicated. There was undoubtedly in his mind a certain coarseness of conception, an occasional vulgarity of thought and expression, which may not have been very perceptible to the majority of those for whom his hymns were in the first instance written, but which very much grates upon the ear of more cultivated readers. They abound chiefly in the 'Lyric Poems,' in which Watts fairly gives the rein to an unchastened fancy; but they occur at intervals throughout his hymns. Whenever he abandoned the simple language of devotion, and attempted to decorate sacred subjects with poetical ornaments after the manner of the incomparable Mr. Cowley,[1] his language at once became strained, florid, and affected.

Yet, notwithstanding the glaring faults which occasionally disfigure them, his hymns were a true benefaction to the religion of the country. Doddridge, in a letter to Watts, dated April 5, 1731, gives a striking testimony to the impression they were capable of producing. He had been preaching to a large assembly of plain country people. After the sermon 'we sang,' he writes, 'one of your hymns, which, if I remember right, was the 140th of the second Book, and in that part of the worship I had the satisfaction to observe tears in the eyes of several of the people; and after the service was over some of them told me they were not able to sing, so deeply were their minds affected. . . . They were most of them poor people who work for their living; yet on the mention of your name I found they had read several of your books with great delight, and that your psalms and hymns were almost their daily entertainment.'[2] The hymn in question was the following one:—

Give me the wings of faith, to rise
Within the veil, and see
The saints above, how great their joys,
And bright their glories be.

[1] Watts' Preface to the *Lyric Poems*.

[2] *Corresp. and Diary of Ph. Doddridge*, iii. 74.

Once they were mourning here below,
And wet their couch with tears;
They wrestled hard, as we do now,
With sins, and doubts, and fears.

I ask them whence their vict'ry came?
They with united breath
Ascribe their conquest to the Lamb,
Their triumph to his death.

They marked the footsteps that he trod,
His zeal inspir'd their breast:
And following their incarnate God,
Possess the promis'd rest.

Our glorious leader claims our praise
For his own pattern given,
While the long cloud of witnesses
Show the same path to heav'n.[1]

A hymn writer who can produce such instances of popular appreciation may afford to be comparatively indifferent to the judgment of more cultivated critics. But Watts has received very high praise from one who was himself a noted hymnist. James Montgomery, while acknowledging that his hymns are often inferior in execution, ranks him, in somewhat exaggerated language, as second to David.[2] Dr. Johnson, who held the strange opinion that no devotional subjects could be treated satisfactorily in verse, limited his praise to this, that 'Watts had done better than others what no man had done well.'[3] They at once attained a great reputation, chiefly no doubt among Dissenters,[4] but also among Churchmen, and in America as well as in England. Rippon, who published his once well-known selection towards the latter part of the century, even made in his preface a sort of apology for not leaving Watts' hymns in sole possession of the field. Great as their fame was, 'it might not,' he said, 'be improper to introduce others, . . . not intended directly or indirectly to set aside Watts, but because many supplemen-

[1] *Hymns*, book ii. 140.
[2] Preface to the *Christian Psalmist*, quoted in *Oxford Essays*, 1858, 151.
[3] *Lives of the Poets* (Cunningham), iii. 255.
[4] J. Newton's *Apologia*, Letter i.—*Works*, 881.

tary ones were wanted.'[1] His psalms were scarcely less popular; and copies of them were sold by thousands from the first date of their appearance in 1718. They were not simply metrical versions in the usual sense of the word, but 'imitated in the language of the New Testament, and applied to the Christian state and worship.'[2] Such adaptations are apt to be not very natural; and in one case, where the 75th Psalm is 'applied to the glorious Revolution by King William, or the happy accession of King George,' the mixture of ideas becomes positively grotesque. Many are decidedly inferior to the New Version: others, however, are of great merit.

Many of Watts' psalms and hymns are very well known, as they deserve to be. Among the former are the 72nd, second part, 'Jesus shall reign where'er the sun,' the 90th, 'O God, our help in ages past,' and the 117th, 'From all that dwell below the skies.' His paraphrase of the 100th, 'Sing to the Lord,' is a favourite hymn in its greatly improved form as altered by Wesley into 'Before Jehovah's awful throne.' Its substance, however, was left unchanged. The 146th is memorable from an interesting association with Wesley's life. He expired while faintly endeavouring[3] to repeat the following lines:—

I'll praise my Maker with my breath;
And when my voice is lost in death,
Praise shall employ my nobler powers:
My days of praise shall ne'er be past,
While life, and thought, and being last,
Or immortality endures.

Among his hymns, some of the best known are, 'Come let us join our cheerful songs,'[4] 'Not all the blood,'[5] 'When I survey the wondrous Cross,'[6] 'Come Holy Spirit, heavenly Dove,'[7] 'When I can read my title clear,'[8] 'I give immortal praise,'[9] and, above all, 'There is a land of pure delight.'[10]

[1] Rippon's *Selection of Hymns*, 1786, Preface.
[2] Title to 'The Psalms.'
[3] *Oxford Essays*, 1858, 150. Saunders, 286.
[4] B. i. 62. [5] B. ii. 142. [6] B. iii. 7.
[7] B. ii. 34.—Not to be confused with a better known hymn, with the same beginning, by Simon Browne. [8] B. ii. 110. [9] B. iii. 38.
[10] B. ii. 66.

This last hymn is said to have been suggested by the charming landscape which met his eyes as he looked over the Southampton Water.[1] The beautiful hymn, 'How bright those glorious spirits shine,' is an improvement by Cameron on Watts' 40th, 'What happy men or angels these.'

Watts' songs for children may some of them excite a smile, and in other instances are tinged oppressively with the gloom of a part of his theology. But, as a whole, they well deserve the favour they have gained. Their homely simplicity commends itself to children and clings to their memories. They are likely long to outlive many verses which are far superior to them as compositions, and which might be thought more attractive to the young in the grace and tenderness with which religious ideas are instilled. But among the moral songs there is one of great beauty—that well-known comparison of a Christian's death to a summer sunset. William Wilberforce[2] speaks of it with special admiration. So do Toplady,[3] Southey,[4] and others; and all readers, young and old, will agree with their opinion.

Among his 'Miscellaneous Thoughts' in prose, there are some poetical pieces which are better than the great majority of his lyrics. Such are those entitled 'The Sacred Concert of Praise,' 'The Midnight Elevation,' and especially the poem upon 'God concealed in Nature,' which closes the short essay on 'Searching after God.'

The hymns of *Philip Doddridge* (1702–1750) were published in 1755, nearly half a century later than those of Watts. They were composed, however, at an earlier date, and this seems the natural place for mention of them. Nothing need here be said of his personal history, except only that he was one of the true worthies of the Christian Church. Like Watts, he was a Dissenter, and steadfastly refused offers of preferment in the English Church. But he would have been glad if terms of comprehension could have been arranged, and engaged in correspondence upon the subject with several of the bishops.

[1] Saunders, 284.
[2] *Memoirs*, v. 289. Quoted by R. A. Willmott, *Lives of S. Poets*, ii. 137.
[3] Toplady's *Works*, vi. 165.
[4] Southey's *Specimens of the Later Poets*, ii. 96.

He was a copious hymn-writer, his published ones being 374 in number. As a whole, they are by no means equal to those of Watts, or of many subsequent authors. It would be very difficult to find one out of all the number which could be ranked with any propriety as a first-class hymn. There is a staid gravity in them, and a sober piety which ensures respect, and gives them some devotional value. And they have few decided faults. But they are never likely to delight and animate as some hymns have the power of doing. They contain few fine verses. There is very little spring and rush in them. They are occasionally not unimpassioned, but even then there is some appearance of effort in them. Doddridge was very careless of his rhymes, and had little ear for melody. There is a want of music in his hymns. They are often prosaic and, as a rule, too didactic. They lose in general character from a cause which doubtless added much to their immediate interest when first sung. It was his habit to compose hymns framed upon the substance of his sermons, to be sung line by line by his congregation, while the words he had preached were yet fresh in their memory.[1] Hymns written under such circumstances were likely to retain the traces of their origin, and show too much of the preacher.

Two of Doddridge's hymns are particularly well known from their inclusion among those which, until lately, were printed at the end of our prayer-books. One of these is the morning hymn for Christmas Day, 'High let us swell our tuneful notes;'[2] the other is the familiar sacramental hymn, 'My God, and is thy table spread.'[3] But neither of them has any special claim to the distinction thus conferred. The Christmas hymn is by no means a striking one, and, notwithstanding the position of vantage which it so long occupied, has never attained any great popularity. His best hymn, and one which is rarely omitted in any collection, is 'Hark the glad sound.'[4] That upon the subject of Mary's choice, 'Beset with snares on every hand,'[5] is also good. Among other hymns by which he is best known are those commencing, 'Ye servants of the Lord,'[6] 'Lord of the Sabbath,

[1] Job Orton's Preface to Doddridge's *Hymns*.
[2] Hy. 201.
[3] Hy. 171.
[4] Id. 203.
[5] Id. 207.
[6] Id. 210.

hear our vows,'[1] 'Ye golden lamps of heaven, farewell,'[2] 'Eternal source of every joy,'[3] 'Grace, 'tis a charming sound,'[4] and 'Awake my soul, stretch every nerve.'[5] The 295th, 'O ye immortal throng,' is also a noticeable hymn upon the subject 'Christ seen of Angels.' The 304th is closed by two graceful lines—

I'll drop my burden at his feet
And bear a song away.

A fine stanza occurs in the 350th—

O Love beyond the stretch of thought!
What matchless wonders hath it wrought!
My faith, while she the grace declares,
Trembles beneath the load she bears.

His 295th hymn, upon the text 'having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better,' though not adapted for congregational use, is one of much beauty, and has a personal interest of its own. It was written, he tells us in his diary, immediately upon awakening from a memorable dream in which his spirit seemed to have departed from him, and to have soared, with a sense of unutterable joy, into regions of the infinite.[6] The hymn[7] bears traces of the strong emotion under which it was composed.

Among the hymns appended 'for use on particular occasions,' are two of his best. One is 'On recovering from sickness, during which much of the divine favour had been experienced.'[8] The other is 'an evening hymn, to be used when composing oneself to sleep.' It is too long to be quoted at length, but the following is a part:—

What though downy slumbers flee,
Strangers to my couch and me!
Sleepless, well I know to rest,
Lodg'd within my Father's breast.
While the empress of the night
Scatters mild her silver light;
While the vivid planets stray
Various thro' their mystic way;

[1] Hy. 310. [2] Id. 119. [3] Id. 43. [4] Id. 286. [5] Id. 296.
[6] Doddridge's *Correspondence*, iv. 357 (*note*).
[7] It begins, 'While on the verge of life I stand.' [8] Hy. 364.

While the stars unnumber'd roll
Round the ever constant pole;
Far above the spangled skies
All my soul to God shall rise;
Midst the silence of the night
Mingling with those angels bright,
Whose harmonious voices raise
Ceaseless love and ceaseless praise;
Through the throng his gentle ear
Shall my tuneless accents hear:
From on high doth He impart
Secret comfort to my heart.[1]

Doddridge's 'Hymns for the Young' never attained much note. George III. as a child was fond of them. 'I must tell you,' writes Dr. Ayscough, his tutor, 'Prince George, to his honour and my shame, had learned several pages in your little book of verses, without any directions from me.'[2]

The motto of the Doddridges—an old Devonshire family—is *Dum vivimus, vivamus.* The Doctor's epigram upon it is well known:—

'Live while you live,' the epicure would say,
And seize the pleasures of the present day.
'Live while you live,' the sacred preacher cries,
And give to God each moment as it flies.
Lord, in my life let both united be:
I live in pleasure, while I live to thee.

Among the earlier hymn-writers of the eighteenth century comes another eminent Nonconformist. *Simon Browne* (1680–1732) had distinguished himself by some spirited answers to Woolston and Tindal; and was appointed in consequence to a post, occupied after him by Samuel Chandler and Dr. Lardner,—a lectureship at the Old Jewry, established by leading Dissenters of different denominations, for the setting forth of the evidences of natural and revealed religion. His hymns, some of which have great merit, were published in 1720. That beginning 'Come Holy Spirit, heavenly Dove,' is well known, as slightly altered from the original, in 'Hymns Ancient and Modern.' Two other good compositions of this

[1] Hy. 363.

[2] Doddridge's *Correspondence*, iv. 375.

author will be found in Sir Roundell Palmer's 'Book of Praise,' one on the Lord's Day, beginning 'Welcome, sweet day, of days the best;' the other upon 'God our happiness.'[1] Some of Simon Browne's hymns are very far inferior to his best. He is sometimes extremely bald and prosaic, as when he ends a stanza:—

> That I may never more forget
> The whole, or any single debt;

or again,—

> Faith is the cogent evidence
> Of things unseen by mortal eyes.[2]

The period that elapsed between Watts and the Wesleys was less favourable to hymn-writing than to secular poetry of a semi-devotional and meditative character.

James Thomson (1700–1748) published his 'Seasons' at intervals between 1726 and 1730. His poetry was of a sort quite new to the age. It seemed at first as if there were small likelihood of its being appreciated. The publisher, when at last one was found to undertake the work, thought for some time he had cause to regret a bargain which had, however, cost him little. But by degrees it found admirers, and before long had attained a wide popularity. The thoughtful and poetical observation of natural objects had been for a long time so strangely neglected, that readers of literature, sated with the artificial style, and with a poetry which ever savoured of city life, turned with delight to Thomson's pages, and found in them a freshness which had all the zest of a new discovery. He was probably all the more admired for not being too much out of sympathy with his age.[3] A 'bard of nature,' as Thomson was speedily called, can do much to further and quicken an intelligent perception of outward phenomena, but he cannot do much towards originating a taste that has hitherto scarcely existed. Readers wondered and admired; but the passages they chiefly admired were not those which Wordsworth, for example, and the lovers of Wordsworth's poetry would most appreciate. Thomson was

[1] 'The Book of Praise,' ccclvi.; also in Rogers' *Lyra Britannica*; &c.
[2] From the 72nd in Dr. Patrick's Collection, 1786.
[3] Leslie Stephen, *History of Thought in the Eighteenth Century*, 360.

more popular than he would otherwise have been because, in close combination with lines which show a keenly observant eye for natural beauty, he was accustomed to add commonplaces and rhapsodies, upon love, simplicity, integrity,[1] or the like; such as might have occurred in any of the favourite poets of the time. These, remarks Wordsworth, or one or other of the stories he has interwoven in his narrative, are the places at which a well-worn copy of the 'Seasons' was wont to open, and which were considered the choice pieces for selection in poetical extracts.[2]

The love of nature which Thomson, in spite of imperfect appreciation, did so much to foster, blends very naturally with religious feeling. In truth, descriptive poetry, however exquisite of its kind, is without its greatest charm if it fails to bring the 'solemn beating heart of nature'[3] into some sort of communion with the higher and more spiritual faculties of the human soul. The perception of a spiritual aspect in nature may take many different forms according to the mind of the observer. It may be definitely religious, or it may be philosophical or mystical, or the animating principle may be a pure moral sentiment pervading the thought. It may exhibit itself in a reverential sense of the power or the wisdom or the love manifested in the order of creation. It may consist in a search for final causes, as where Sir Thomas Browne writes:—'The wisdom of God receives small honour from those vulgar heads that rudely stare about, and with a gross rusticity admire his works. . . . Every essence hath its final cause and some positive end both of its essence and operation. This is the cause I grope after in the works of nature; in this hangs the providence of God. To raise so beauteous a structure as the world and the creatures thereof, was but his art; but their sundry and divided operations, with their predestinated ends, are from the treasury of his wisdom.'[4] It may be a feeling of parable and hidden allegories concealed in material phenomena; or it may be a sense of conjectured unity and mysterious sympathies between the energies that work in nature and in the soul of man; or

[1] Leslie Stephen, *History of Thought in the Eighteenth Century*, 360.
[2] Wordsworth's *Poet. Works*, supplementary essay to Preface.
[3] E. B. Browning's *Poems*, 'A Sea-side Walk.' [4] *Relig. Med.* ii. 18.

thoughts of correspondences between external influences and inward emotions—material powers and human destinies; or a grateful recognition of properties given to hill and wood, and sea and sky, to tranquillise and soothe the spirit; or, on the other hand, the subjective principle may chiefly consist in the regretful feeling of an utter absence of sympathy between the inward and the outward world, a sort of recoil from calm forces which seem utterly alien to our cares and joys.

> All sights are alike to thy brightness!
> What if thou waken the birds to their song, dost thou waken no sorrow?[1]

Or it may be an oppressive realisation of the contrast between the blunders and sins of man, and the order and harmony which surrounds him. Or it may be simply an imaginative power by which in numberless ways natural objects are made suggestive of things that touch more closely our higher human interests.

In Thomson's poem on the 'Seasons,' the presence of the religious element is unmistakable. It is not obtruded on the reader, but it evidently pervades the whole. If it had simply consisted in a feeling of the majesty and power of the Creator, as displayed in His works, it would have been no more than is noticeable in a great deal of the sacred poetry of the age in which he lived. It is remarkable, for instance, how many paraphrases were produced during the first half of the eighteenth century upon those psalms and chapters in the Book of Job, and other parts of Scripture, in which the general burden of the hymn is 'All ye works of the Lord, bless ye the Lord.' Religious feeling, unsettled by the great controversy of the age, was perhaps more than usually disposed to fall back upon thoughts of creative wisdom and almighty power. It will be remembered there was very little theoretical Atheism in that age, and what there was scarcely ever ventured to make itself heard. And Deism, while it dissociated theology from history, while it made the idea of God more and more an impersonal abstraction, and removed Him, as it were, to an ever increasing distance from the ways and works of men, left the thought of Divine Creation comparatively inviolate.

[1] C. Kingsley, *Andromeda*, 204.

Thomson's theology, so far as it appears in his poems—for his subject, as treated by him, did not bring him into contact with distinctively Christian doctrine—was not unaffected by the vague and impersonal ideas which so often characterised the religious philosophy of the period. The thought of God in nature does, indeed, perpetually recur. But there are passages where the poet appears, at first sight, to speak as if the Being whom he worshipped were a remote abstraction, synonymous, or nearly so, with the natural forces by which He works. For example:—

> Oh nature! all sufficient! over all!
> Enrich me with the knowledge of thy works.[1]

Or again—

> Nature! great parent! whose unceasing hand
> Rolls round the seasons of the changeful year—
> How mighty, how majestic are thy works![2]

The opening of the 'Hymns of the Seasons' has something of the same character:

> These, as they change, Almighty Father, these
> Are but the varied God.[3]

Such words, taken by themselves, might seem like the expression of a pantheistic creed which deified universal nature. The inference, however, would not be correct. It is obvious, both in the course of the noble hymn in question, and from other passages in his works, that there was no real confusion in the poet's mind between nature and the Creator, before whose unseen presence he reverently adored. That feeling of the presence of God in all His works had with him a life and reality which contrasted very strongly with the dry unsubstantial abstractions of the Deists. He could not think of God without thinking also of His works; he could not muse with delight upon the beauty and the wonders he saw around him without meditating as well, not upon the power only, but on the love of their Creator. Universal nature was as rich, to his eyes, in hope, as it was in full and varied life. He

[1] 'Autumn.' [2] 'Winter.'
[3] 'Hymn of the Seasons.'

looked upon it as a progressive scale—'life rising still on life in higher tone'—a Jacob's ladder, mounting

> up from unfeeling mould
> To seraphs burning round the Almighty's throne.[1]

This thought was continually present in Thomson's profounder reflections, and evidently suggested to his mind a solution of many difficulties, enabling him to look forward to a divine future, to which only the faint approaches were at present visible. Like most of the writers of his time, he had been much influenced by Pope. He has adopted Pope's optimism almost in his words, but in a far less crude and more imaginative form. A candid and close observer, he did not attempt to shut his eyes to, nor to gloss over, the manifold imperfections of the present state of existence. But when he considered

> The mighty chain of beings, lessening down
> From Infinite Perfection to the brink
> Of dreary nothing,[2]

it seemed to him that, though we cannot penetrate the cloud which sits deep over the will of Providence, this is at all events but 'the infancy of being,' and

> cannot prove
> The final issue of the works of God
> By boundless love and perfect wisdom form'd
> And ever rising with the rising mind.[3]

Keble himself had not an intenser feeling that it was no mere poet's dream

> Which bids us see in heaven and earth,
> In all fair things around,
> Strong yearnings for a blest new birth
> With sinless glories crown'd.
>
> Which bids us hear at each sweet pause
> From care, and want, and toil,
> When dewy eve her curtain draws
> Over the day's turmoil,

[1] 'Castle of Indolence,' canto ii. [2] 'Summer.' [3] Id.

In the low chant of wakeful birds,
In the deep weltering flood,
In whispering leaves, these solemn words,
God made us all for good.[1]

To Thomson's thought nature was full of promise, 'awaiting renovation,'[2]—a 'second birth,' when awakening nature should

hear
The new creating word, and start to life
In every heightened form, from pain and death
For ever free.[3]

The Great Shepherd reigns,
And his unsuffering Kingdom yet shall come.[4]

Man and nature, glorified spirits and spirits of men who 'through stormy life toil tempest-beaten,'[5] were all, in his mind, component elements of the one vast order, one progressive scheme. Mankind may thwart their own great destiny. To them therefore, in his allegorical poem, he cries—

Heavens! can you then thus waste, in shameful wise,
Your few important days of trial here?
Heirs of Eternity! y-born to rise
Through endless states of being, still more near
To bliss approaching, and perfection clear,
Can you renounce a fortune so sublime,
Such glorious hopes, your backward steps to steer,
And roll, with vilest brutes, through mud and slime?
No! no! your heaven-touch'd heart disdains the sordid crime![6]

But God's order, in man or nature, now or hereafter, he perfectly trusted in, as ever and wholly good:—

Since God is ever present, ever felt,
In the void waste, as in the city full;
And where he vital breathes, there must be joy.
When ev'n at last the solemn hour should come,
And wing my mystic flight to future worlds,

[1] *Christian Year*, Fourth S. after Trinity.
[2] 'Autumn.'
[3] 'Winter.'
[4] 'Winter.'
[5] 'Summer.'
[6] 'Castle of Indolence,' canto ii.

I cheerful will obey; there, with new powers,
Will rising wonders sing: I cannot go
Where universal Love not smiles around,
Sustaining all yon orbs, and all their suns;
From seeming evil still educing good,
And better thence again, and better still
In infinite progression. But I lose
Myself in Him—in Light ineffable.
Come then, expressive Silence, muse His praise.[1]

The works of *Edward Young* (1681–1765) are about as strong a contrast to those of Thomson as can be imagined. Transition from one to the other is almost like passing from a bright morning on a breezy down to the seclusion of a churchyard at midnight, or to the heavy air and hushed stillness of a shaded sick-room. The 'Seasons' beam with day; the 'Night Thoughts' do indeed sparkle, but it is with the lustre of jewels upon black drapery flashing back the lamplight. The general merit and defects of 'Night Thoughts' are well known. It obtained a very wide circulation, and was one of the few English books that won fame and appreciation in France. Nor was its popularity undeserved. Every page bears the stamp of originality, talent, and thought. Even its most glaring faults are many of them such as none but a clever man would fall into. It is no ordinary writer that could overload a poem with such surplusage of varied argument, such a surfeit of epigram and antithesis, such superabundance of skilful rhetoric. He is sometimes extravagant, sometimes enigmatical, sometimes affected; he is often tedious, oftener laboured; he is uneven in the extreme: passages which rise into sublimity are followed by others which sink into utter bathos; but the impression of intellectual and literary power is never lost sight of.

Young's remarkable poem has two great faults which run through it from beginning to end. The first is a morbid gloom, which caused Warburton, at its first appearance, to scout it as a 'dismal rhapsody.'[2] The other is that it is artificial. Such forced effort after force, however successful it may often be in the immediate effect produced leaves

[1] 'Hymn of the Seasons.

[2] Warburton to Doddridge, Doddridge's *Corresp.* II 198.

behind it an unsatisfactory feeling of unreality. There is no sufficient reason to charge the poet with being insincere. He was an ambitious man, whose temper, naturally melancholic, had been crossed by disappointment. He thought he had been overlooked, and that he was entitled to honours and preferment which had been held back from him. Adulation of the great—too common an offence in those days to be accounted as odious as it deserves to be—seems to have been the worst point in his character. In other respects he appears to have deserved the high esteem in which he was held by those who knew him best. But his wit and cleverness, of the possession of which he was fully conscious, were a snare to him as a writer on sacred subjects. He was impressed in all sincerity with the solemnity of the thoughts which his theme suggested to him; but he could not refrain from dressing them out with an art under which their genuineness was disguised.

It is of course impossible within the limits of this chapter to enter into any sort of analysis of a poem which, amid much that is tedious, abounds in striking reflections—not unfrequently disfigured midway by some ill-sorted phrase—upon the problems of man's existence, his hopes, responsibilities and fears, and the awe and mystery of which the universe is full. A few passages only can be quoted.

Early in the 'First Night,' there occur some pointed verses on the strange microcosm of human nature, which afford also a good example of the exaggerated antithetical style to which Young was prone:

> How poor, how rich, how abject, how august,
> How complicate, how wonderful is man!
> How passing wonder He who made him such!
> Who centred in our make such strange extremes!
> From different natures marvellously mixed,
> Connection exquisite of distant worlds!
> Distinguish'd link in being's endless chain,
> Midway from nothing to the Deity![1]
> A beam æthereal, sullied and absorb'd!
> Though sullied and dishonour'd, still divine!

[1] Young was very rarely anything but original, but in these two lines he has borrowed from a previously quoted passage of Thomson.

Dim miniature of greatness absolute!
An heir of glory, a frail child of dust!
Helpless immortal! insect infinite!
A worm! a god! I tremble at myself
And at myself am lost! At home a stranger,
Thought wanders up and down, surpris'd, aghast,
And wondering at her own.[1]

The following three lines are very beautiful:—

Talk they of morals? O thou bleeding Love!
Thou maker of new morals to mankind!
The grand morality is love of Thee.[2]

He thus conceives of a future beatified state of soul and intellect:—

How great
To mingle interests, converse amities,
With all the sons of reason, scatter'd wide
Through habitable space, wherever born,
Howe'er endow'd! To live free citizens
Of universal nature! To lay hold
By more than feeble faith on the Supreme!
To call heaven's rich, unfathomable mines
(Mines, which support archangels in their State)
Our own! To rise in science, as in bliss,
Initiate in the secrets of the skies!
To read Creation; read its mighty plan
In the bare bosom of the Deity!
The plan and execution to collate!
To see, before each glance of piercing thought,
All cloud, all shadow, blown remote; and leave
No mystery but that of Love divine,
Which lifts us on the seraph's flaming wing
From earth's 'aceldama,' this field of blood,
Of inward anguish, and of outward ill.[3]

With Young should be mentioned *Robert Blair*, a poet of somewhat similar temperament. His poem entitled 'The Grave,' published in 1762, is undoubtedly a work of no ordinary character. It is rather grim and grisly, like his spectres; but it shows much imaginative power, and is full of vigour and animation. Without being a sacred poem, its

[1] 'Night,' i. [2] Id. iv. [3] Id. vi.

tone is thoroughly religious. Besides a charming incidental picture of summer in the country—the more attractive by contrast with its surroundings—there are some striking passages in it. Such is that which describes death coming with sudden horror upon one

> Who, counting on long years of pleasure here,
> Is quite unfurnished for that world to come.[1]

There are also some fine lines upon sin as compared with other evils, beginning—

> What havoc hast thou made, foul master, sin!
> Greatest and first of ills.[2]

A third passage, which might be quoted if it were not too long, pictures the tranquil death of a good man. The opening lines are—

> Sure the last end
> Of the good man is peace! How calm his exit!
> Night-dews fall not more gently to the ground,
> Nor weary, worn-out winds expire so soft.[3]

Mark Akenside (1721–1770) was another of those didactic writers on semi-religious subjects in whom the eighteenth century was prolific. His 'Pleasures of Imagination' was published in the first instance in 1744, but was rewritten in his later years, and appeared in a very altered form in 1772, soon after his death. It is well described by Jeffreys as 'a sort of classical and philosophical rapture, which no elegance of language could easily have rendered popular, but which had merits of no vulgar order for those who could study it.'[4] It is, indeed, difficult reading. Not from any fault in thought or style: the versification flows musically; Aikin calls it 'perhaps the most perfect specimen of blank verse that the language affords.'[5] But it is tedious, because the reader does not easily perceive what the writer is aiming at. It is a defect which was mainly owing to the nature of his subject. The religious and ethical philosophy of the day was so

[1] 'The Grave,' 350–69. [2] Id. 601. [3] Id. 706.
[4] F. Jeffreys' *Contribution to the Edin. Review*, 166.
[5] J. Aikin's *Letters on English Poetry*, 161.

divorced from history, and so vague and abstract in its nature, that a writer who wished to embody it in poetry,[1] and represent it to the eye by imagery, was tempted to have recourse to hollow allegorical figures—personifications of ideas and qualities, which may adorn, but are certainly very apt to perplex, the argument. Akenside was an admirer of Shaftesbury's writings, and his 'Pleasures of Imagination' is, to a great extent, a poetical exposition of that philosophy. A reflective and, in his way, a devout and religious man, imbued also with the loftier ideas of Plato, he escaped the levity of Shaftesbury, and was chiefly attracted by his speculations on the connection of beauty with truth and goodness, the operation of the imaginative upon the moral faculties, and the relations of pleasure with virtue.

William Hamilton (1704–1754) was an ardent Jacobite, who joined the Pretender in the movement of 1745. His 'Contemplation,' which was published two or three years previous to that date, contains some pleasing lines. In 1746, after the defeat of Preston Pans, when he was wandering among the hills and moors in constant and imminent peril, he wrote some touching verses, of which the following is a part. It is a soliloquy with himself:—

Now in this sad and dismal hour
  Of multiplied distress,
Has any former thought the power
  To make thy sorrows less?

When all around thee cruel snares
  Threaten thy destined breath,
And every sharp reflection bears
  Want, exile, chains or death,

Can ought that past in youth's fond reign
  Thy pleasing vein restore?
Lives beauty's gay and festive train
  In memory's soft store?

Or does the muse? 'Tis said her art
  Can fiercest pangs appease—

[1] See some remarks of Leslie Stephen, *Hist. of E. Thought in the Eighteenth Century*, ii. 365–6.

Can she to thy poor trembling heart
Now speak the words of peace?

Yet she was wont at early dawn
To whisper thee repose,
Nor was her friendly aid withdrawn
At grateful evening's close.

Friendship, 'tis true, its sacred might
May mitigate thy doom;
As lightning shot across the night
A moment gilds the gloom.

O God! Thy providence alone
Can work a wonder here,
Can change to gladness every moan,
And banish all my fear.

Thy arm, all powerful to save,
May every doubt destroy;
And from the horrors of the grave
New raise to life and joy.

From this, as from a copious spring,
Pure consolation flows;
Makes the faint heart 'mid sufferings sing,
And midst despair repose.

Yet from its creature gracious Heaven,
Most merciful and just,
Asks but, for life and safety given,
Our faith and humble trust.[1]

Walter Harte (1700–1773), Vice-Principal of St. Mary Hall, Oxford, afterwards tutor to Lord Chesterfield's son, and finally Canon of Windsor, was the writer of some devotional poetry which has little in common with the general character of his age. He had been brought up among the best traditions of the Nonjurors. His father, whose memory he affectionately celebrates in a poem entitled 'Macarius, or the Christian Confessor,' was a man who had been held in most deserved honour for his piety, his learning, and the self-denying simplicity of his life. He had energetically remonstrated with Judge Jeffries in behalf of the victims of Monmouth's rebellion; and that truculent barbarian, if he did not relent

[1] 'A Soliloquy,' 1746.

at his intercessions, at all events respected the intercessor, for whom he obtained, unasked, a prebendary stall at Bristol. Ken and Kettlewell, Nelson, Dodwell, and Hooper were his friends. In Queen Anne's time, Lord Chancellor Harcourt showed his esteem for the stout-hearted Nonjuror by offering him a bishopric. He declined it however, and died in seclusion in 1735. Walter Harte was a student and theologian of much the same type as his father, devoting himself especially to early patristic literature.

Harte published various sermons, translations, poetical miscellanies, and a carefully written history of Gustavus Adolphus. But his 'Divine Poems' were what he considered his principal work. They appeared in 1767. He was inclined to call them 'Emblems,' after the example of Quarles, of whom he was an admirer. Chesterfield, on the other hand, who had a supreme contempt for that poet, wanted him to name them 'Moral Tales.' Harte compromised the matter by calling them 'Parables, Fables, Emblematic Visions, &c.' They sometimes give an idea of being rather laboured, and of being overburdened by the patristic allusions which he cites or refers to in the foot-notes. But his poetry is by no means of a commonplace order. In his 'Vision' of Thomas à Kempis[1] he has occasionally succeeded in rendering into fitting verse some of the apophthegms of the 'Imitatio Christi.' For example :—

> With prayers thy evening close, thy morn begin ;
> But heaven's true Sabbath is to rest from sin.

Or again—

> Most would buy heaven without a price or loss ;
> They like the paradise, but shun the cross.

His best poem is the 'Meditation on Christ's Death and Passion. An Emblem.' It is headed with the motto—

> Respice dum transis, quia sis mihi causa doloris.

Part of it is as follows :—

> Haste not so fast on worldly cares employ'd,
> Thy bleeding Saviour asks a short delay :

[1] *British Poets*, ix. 857-60.

What trifling bliss is still to be enjoy'd?
What change of folly wings thee on thy way?
Look back a moment, pause awhile, and stay.
For thee thy God assum'd the human frame;
For thee the guiltless pains and anguish try'd;
Thy passions (sin excepted) His became:
Like thee He suffer'd, hunger'd, wept, and dy'd.

. . . . . .

From this one prospect draw thy sole relief,
Here learn submission, passive duties learn;
Here drink the calm oblivion of thy grief;
Eschew each danger, every good discern,
And the true wages of thy virtue earn.
Reflect, O man, on such stupendous love,
Such sympathy divine, and tender care:
Beseech the Paraclete thine heart to move,
And offer up to heaven thy silent prayer.

Keble has remarked of *Gray's* 'Elegy' (1751), that, to the shame of the eighteenth century, it is about the only specimen of 'the indirect, and perhaps the more effective, species of sacred poetry, produced in that age, which has obtained any celebrity.'[1] Its popularity was immediate; in a very short time it passed through eleven editions. It may, in fact, be fairly said of it, that from the time of its first appearance it has always been one of the best known poems in the whole range of English literature. Dr. Johnson, who did not at all appreciate Gray's other poetry, and has done him, for the most part, very scanty justice, had only commendation for the 'Elegy.' 'Had Gray,' said he, 'written often thus, it had been vain to blame, and useless to praise him.'[2]

Gray was not the founder of a school of poetry in the sense that Cowley, or Dryden and Pope had been. His poetical works were few, and a good deal that he wrote was received with a sort of blank wonder, as if it were simply unintelligible. But he did much to refine and elevate taste. He was called 'Gothic' in a sense that implied disparagement. In reality, the infusion of ideas derived from the Northern Sagas had a decidedly beneficial effect upon our literature, as having a freshness and a vigour in them which

[1] In the *Qu. Rev.* 32, 231. [2] *Lives of the Poets*, iii. 417.

had for some time been wanting. Cowper used to maintain that Gray was the only sublime poet since Shakespeare.[1] At all events there was in his work a simple dignity, an unaffected energy, which was peculiarly refreshing by contrast with the artificial graces and pomposities which had been too much in vogue. It has been said, with truth, that Gray was among the first Englishmen who showed any capacity for the appreciation of mountain scenery. In more than one way he was representative of a new tone of thought which, at the middle of the eighteenth century, was steadily but slowly gaining ground among cultivated men. Thirty or forty years earlier, the character of Gray's genius would have been so strikingly exceptional as to seem almost an anachronism. His writings mark with tolerable accuracy the termination of a period in poetical literature. For a long time previously, there had scarcely been a poet in whom the influence of Pope, or at least of the style of thought and writing of which Pope was the most brilliant representative, could not be distinctly traced. Gray was the first writer of poetry in that age who wholly emancipated himself from it. One distinguishing quality, however, they had in common. Not Pope even could outvie Gray in the polished finish of his verses.

It is only by a certain latitude of interpretation that Gray can be included among writers of sacred poetry. Yet there is great religious beauty in the last verse of the 'Elegy'—

> No further seek his merits to disclose,
> Or draw his frailties from their dread abode,
> (There they alike in trembling hope repose),
> The bosom of his Father and his God.

The name of Gray naturally suggests that of his brother poet, and intimate friend and biographer. *William Mason* (1725–1797) was an opulent clergyman, Fellow of Pembroke Hall, Cambridge, and afterwards Rector of Aston, in Derbyshire, and Prebendary of York—a man of many accomplishments, skilled in music and painting, keenly alive to the sublime and picturesque, and gifted with a most poetical imagination. Without possessing anything like the erudition of his friend Gray, he was yet a competent scholar, and was particularly

[1] Cowper to J. Hill. Quoted in Wilmott's *Lives of Sacred Poets*, 205.

well read in old English and Italian poetry. In politics he was an enthusiastic Liberal. In theology he was orthodox. An active-minded and conscientious man, he did not allow his multifarious tastes to interfere with the duties of his callings. He was charitable and hospitable; and a genial spirit of religion, traceable throughout all his life and works, shed a special brightness over all his later years.

Mason's sacred poetry is varied in kind. His Sunday morning and evening hymns, written for use in York Cathedral, are tolerably well known. The former begins—

> Again returns the day of holy rest,
> Which, when He made the world, Jehovah blest;
> When, like His own, He bade our labours cease,
> And all be piety, and all be peace.

The latter—

> Soon will the evening star, with silver ray,
> Shed its mild lustre on this sacred day;
> Resume we then, ere sleep and silence reign,
> The rites that holiness and Heav'n ordain.[1]

Among his earlier odes, published in 1756, there is a fine paraphrase of the 'proverb against the King of Babylon' in the 14th chapter of Isaiah. It is entitled 'The Fate of Tyranny.' No paraphrase can vie with the sublimity of the simple text; and in Mason's style there is generally some tendency to overload grand conceptions with a too great profusion of ornament. But there is certainly much grandeur in the following rendering of the passage beginning at the 7th verse ('The whole earth is at rest, and is quiet; they break forth into singing,' &c.). It should be compared, while read, with the original.

I.

2

> He falls; and earth again is free,
> Hark! at the call of liberty,
> All nature lifts the choral song.
> The fir trees, on the mountain's head,
> Rejoice through all their pomp of shade;
> The lordly cedars nod on sacred Lebanon:

[1] *Works of W. Mason*, ii. 467.

'Tyrant,' they cry, 'since thy fell force is broke,
Our proud heads pierce the skies, nor fear the woodman's stroke.'

3

Hell, from her gulph profound,
Rouses at thine approach; and all around
The dreadful notes of preparation sound.
See, at the awful call,
Her shadowy heroes all,
Ev'n mighty kings, the heirs of empire wide,
Rising, with solemn state, and slow,
From their sable thrones below,
Meet and insult thy pride.
What, dost thou join our ghostly train,
A flitting shadow, light and vain?
Where is thy pomp, thy festive throng,
Thy revel dance, and wanton song?
Proud king! corruption fastens on thy breast;
And calls her crawling brood, and bids them share the feast.

II.

1

Oh Lucifer! thou radiant star;
Son of the morn; whose rosy car
Flam'd foremost in the van of day:
How art thou fall'n, thou king of light!
How fall'n from thy meridian height!
Who saidst, 'The distant poles shall hear me and obey.
High o'er the stars my sapphire throne shall glow,
And as Jehovah's self, my voice the heavens shall bow.'

2

He spake, he died. Distain'd with gore,
Beside yon yawning cavern hoar,
See where his livid corse is laid.
The aged pilgrim passing by
Surveys him long with dubious eye;
And muses on his fate, and shakes his reverend head.
Just Heav'ns! is thus thy pride imperial gone?
Is this poor heap of dust the king of Babylon?

3

Is this the man whose nod
Made the earth tremble: whose terrific nod
Levelled her loftiest cities? Where he trod
Famine pursu'd and frown'd;
Till nature, groaning round,
Saw her rich realms transform'd to deserts dry;
While at his crowded prison's gate,
Grasping the keys of fate,
Stood stern captivity.
Vain man! behold thy righteous doom;
Behold each neighb'ring monarch's tomb;
The trophied arch, the breathing bust,
The laurel shades their sacred dust,
While thou, vile outcast, on this hostile plain,
Moulderst, a vulgar corse, among the vulgar slain.[1]

Mason continued to write poetry in his old age. If it had somewhat lost in vigour, it gained in a deeper tone of serene and thankful piety. The following are the closing lines of his 'Religio Clerici,' written in 1796:—

Father, Redeemer, Comforter divine!
This humble offering to Thy equal shrine
Here thy unworthy servant grateful pays,
Of undivided thanks, united praise,
For all those mercies which at birth began,
And ceaseless flow'd through life's long lengthen'd span—
Propt my frail frame through all the varied scene,
With health enough for many a day serene;
Enough of science clearly to discern
How few important truths the wisest learn;
Enough of art ingenuous to employ
The vacant hours when graver studies cloy;
Enough of wealth to serve each honest end,
The poor to succour, or assist a friend;
Enough of faith in Scripture to descry
That the sure hope of immortality,
Which only can the fear of death remove,
Flows from the fountain of Redeeming Love.[2]

At the risk of quoting at disproportionate length from the

[1] *Works of W. Mason*, ii. 46-8. [2] Id. 450.

writings of this poet, the sonnet must be added which he wrote on his last birthday, February 23, 1797, only a few weeks before his death:—

Again the year on easy wheels has roll'd,
To bear me to the term of seventy-two.
Yet still my eyes can seize the distant blue
Of yon wild Peak, and still my footsteps bold,
Unpropp'd by staff, support me to behold
How Nature, to her Maker's mandates true,
Calls Spring's impartial heralds to the view,
The snowdrop pale, the crocus spik'd with gold;
And still (thank Heav'n), if I not falsely deem,
My lyre, yet vocal, freely can afford
Strains not discordant to each moral theme
Fair Truth inspires, and aids me to record
(Best of poetic palms!) my faith supreme
In Thee, my God, my Saviour, and my Lord![1]

It has been before observed that *Dr. Johnson* (1709–1785) did not believe in the capabilities of devotional verse. For his own part, he possessed few of the more essential qualifications of a poet. 'His poems are the plain and sensible effusions of a mind never hurried beyond itself, to which the use of rhyme adds no beauty, and from which the use of prose would detract no force.'[2] He rests for his fame upon other qualities than those which demand enthusiasm and imaginative power. Nevertheless, the closing lines of his 'Vanity of Human Wishes,' published 1749, are well worthy of being quoted—

Yet when the sense of sacred presence fires,
And strong devotion to the skies aspires,
Pour forth thy fervour for a healthful mind,
Obedient passions, and a will resign'd;
For love, which scarce collective man can fill;
For faith, that panting for a happier seat,
Counts death kind nature's signal of retreat:
These goods for man the laws of heav'n ordain,
These goods He grants, who grants the power to gain;

[1] *Works of W. Mason*, ii. 131.
[2] Anderson's 'Life of Johnson,' *British Poets*, xi. 822.

With these celestial Wisdom calms the mind,
And makes the happiness she does not find.[1]

Oliver Goldsmith (1729–1774) was not a writer of sacred poetry. But the pure religious tone that runs through the 'Deserted Village,' and the graceful picture it contains of simple unassuming piety, place it on the same high level with Gray's 'Elegy.' Poems such as these could scarcely fail to have a purifying and elevating influence upon the taste of those who read and appreciated them. *Shenstone's* 'Schoolmistress,' published in 1741, is a work of somewhat the same order, although its author was so afraid of the subject not being considered dignified enough for poetry, that he has a little disguised, under a certain air of caricature, its genuine simplicity and pathos.

Samuel Boyse (1708–1749) was one of those unhappy men in whom good impulses, joined to a weak and ill-regulated disposition, make life a sad alternation of better purposes, relapse, and poignant repentance. He lived in want, and died a pauper. In 1741, he published a poem upon the 'Attributes of Deity,' which Fielding has called 'a very noble one,' of which Pope said that it contained lines which he would willingly have owned, and which James Hervey spoke of in the warmest terms of admiration. This poem passed through a third edition in 1752. It reaches a moderately high level, and keeps it; its language is easy; its tone devotional; but it contains no striking thoughts, and few passages which deserve any special note.

Christopher Smart (1722–1771)[2] was a writer of very considerable genius. At Cambridge, where he held a fellowship at Pembroke Hall, he five times took the Seatonian prize for a poetical essay upon a sacred subject, and his poems are among the best of that series. There is a want of carefulness and accuracy about them, but much talent, and the glow of warm religious feeling. After Smart had left Cambridge, where he had become very embarrassed in his circumstances, he gained a precarious living in London by literary work, and gained there the friendship and pity of Johnson, Goldsmith, Garrick, and other distinguished men. A strong predisposition

[1] *British Poets*, xi. 843.

[2] Id. xi.

to insanity will excuse the fits of reckless extravagance to which he was apt to give way. He composed what was generally considered his finest poem, 'The Song of David,' whilst under confinement as a lunatic, indenting the lines with a key upon the wainscot. No copy of the poem is now, as it appears, known to be extant, but a few stanzas, remarkable for their animation, have been preserved.

He sung of God, the mighty source
Of all things, the stupendous force
On which all things depend:
From whose right arm, beneath whose eyes,
All period, power, and enterprise
Commence, and reign, and end.
The world, the clustering spheres He made,
The glorious light, the soothing shade,
Dale, champaign, grove, and hill;
The multitudinous abyss
Where secrecy remains in bliss,
And Wisdom hides her skill.
Tell them 'I am,' Jehovah said
To Moses, while Earth heard in dread,
And smitten to the heart,
At once above, beneath, around,
All nature, without voice or sound,
Replied, O Lord, 'Thou Art.'[1]

Amid all his failings, to whatever extent he was responsible for them, he was always keenly sensitive to the emotions whether of friendship or religion. He would often entreat his friends to pray with him and for him, and his religious poems were often written upon his knees.

Some remarks will be found in a previous chapter upon *John Byrom*[2] (1691–1763). He was an able man, a Fellow of the Royal Society, a Jacobite in politics, warmly attached to the Church of England, yet not so as to be blind to her deficiencies. He had many sympathies in common with the Methodists; but found teaching far more entirely congenial to his mind in the writings of William Law and the French and German mystics. The doctrines most completely repugnant to him were those of Calvinism, and views such as

[1] Saunders 303. [2] Chalmers' *English Poets*, xv.

were held by James Hervey and others on Justification and imputed merit. For the rest, he was an earnest, truth-loving man, who thought much for himself on all matters connected with religion, and had little in common with the most prevalent phases of theological thought. As a versifier, he has embodied many sound and suggestive reflections in wretched doggerel; using rhyme as a mere convenience of form. When, however, he set himself to write poetry instead of metrical essays, he showed a power and depth of feeling which place him among the foremost writers of sacred verse in the last century. The following is entitled

THE DESPONDING SOUL'S WISH.

My spirit longeth for Thee
Within my troubled breast;
Although I be unworthy
Of so Divine a guest.

Of so Divine a guest
Unworthy though I be;
Yet has my heart no rest
Unless it come from Thee.

Unless it come from Thee,
In vain I look around;
In all that I can see,
No rest is to be found.

No rest is to be found
But in Thy blessed love;
O let my wish be crown'd,
And send it from above.

Another is entitled

THE SOUL'S TENDENCY TOWARDS ITS TRUE CENTRE.

Stones towards the earth descend;
Rivers to the ocean roll;
Every motion has some end;
What is thine, beloved soul?

Mine is, where thy Saviour is;
There with Him I hope to dwell:
Jesu is the central bliss;
Love the force that doth impel.

Truly thou hast answer'd right:
Now may heaven's attractive grace
Toward the source of thy delight
Speed along thy quickening pace!

Thank thee for thy generous care;
Heaven, that did the wish inspire,
Through thy instrumental prayer,
Plumes the wings of my desire.

Now, methinks, aloft I fly;
Now with angels bear a part:
Glory be to God on high,
Peace to every Christian heart.

Perhaps, however, the most striking part of John Byrom's poetry is to be found in the series of religious epigrams under the heading 'Miscellaneous Pieces.' Three of them must be quoted:—

Let thy repentance be without delay.
If thou defer it to another day,
Thou must repent for one day more of sin,
While a day less remains to do it in.

If gold be offered thee, thou dost not say,
'To-morrow I will take it, not to-day:'
Salvation offered, why art thou so cool,
To let thyself become to-morrow's fool?

Faith, Hope, and Love were question'd what they thought
Of future glory, which religion taught:
Now Faith believed it firmly to be true,
And Hope expected so to find it too;
Love answer'd, smiling with a conscious glow,
'Believe? expect? I *know* it to be true.'

His congregational hymns are some of them very indifferent. Yet sometimes, as in that beginning 'The Lord is my Shepherd, His goodness my song,'[1] there is a swing of words which may cause them to linger in the ear. He was, however, the author of one well-known hymn, the Christmas carol beginning 'Christians, awake, salute the happy morn.'

James Merrick (1720–1769), a fellow of Trinity College,

[1] In J. Patrick's *Collection of Psalms*, 1786.

Oxford, was spoken of by Bishop Lowth as 'one of the best of men, and most eminent of scholars.' His talents were early in development. At the age of fourteen he published the 'Messiah, a Divine Essay,' and while he was still a boy at school had translated Tryphiodorus, and was carrying on a correspondence with Reimarus, the learned professor of philosophy at Hamburg.[1] He is best known by his paraphrases of the Canticles and Psalms.[2] Their fault is that they are too smooth, too elegant. They are sorely wanting in the nerve and majesty of the original, although, considered by themselves, they have much beauty.

That extraordinary youth, *Thomas Chatterton* (1752–1770), whose boyish productions caused such stir in the literary world, and whose unhappy death has always seemed so piteous, must not be passed over without some short mention. It is useless to conjecture what might have been the ultimate character of this child of impulse. His proud, fiery genius, so restless as scarcely to allow even of the most necessary minimum of sleep,[3] struggling without any audible murmur against neglect, indigence, and starvation, was sometimes tempted to defiant rebellion against God's will. Yet his life was pure, temperate, and amiable; and the pathetic religious feelings which he has expressed in some of his verses might encourage a hope that the licentious impieties to which in certain moods he gave utterance, were transient workings of an evil power which would have succumbed to holier influences.

The following four verses are from 'The Resignation:'—

O God, whose justice shakes the sky;
Whose eye this atom globe surveys;
To Thee, my only rock, I fly,
Thy mercy in Thy justice praise.

The mystic mazes of Thy will,
The shadows of celestial light,

[1] Southey's *Later English Poets*, ii. 391.

[2] Merrick, J., *Poems on Sacred Subjects*, 1763. *The Psalms Translated and Paraphrased*, 1765. Among his best paraphrases may be mentioned those of the 8th, the 23rd, and the 121st Psalms. His version was introduced into many parish churches, but was found to be not very well adapted for congregational use.

[3] A friend, who shared his room, said that he never went to bed till very late, often not till three or four, and always got up with him at five or six.—Anderson's 'Life of Chatterton,' *B. Poets*, xi. 308.

Are past the power of human skill—
But what th' Eternal acts is right.

O teach me, in the trying hour,
When anguish swells the dewy tear,
To still my sorrows, own Thy power,
Thy goodness love, Thy justice fear.

. . . .

The gloomy mantle of the night,
Which on my sinking spirit steals,
Will vanish at the morning light,
Which God, my East, my Sun, reveals.[1]

Dr. Johnson, remarking one day (May 15, 1784) that he had been dining at Mrs. Garrick's, with Mrs. Carter, Miss Hannah More, and Miss Fanny Burney, added that three such women were not to be found; except Mrs. Lennox, he did not know where he could find a fourth.[2] The *Mrs. Carter* there mentioned was undoubtedly one of the most talented women in the last century. Garrick, in his epilogue to 'The Inflexible Captive,' spoke of her with admiration as one—

Who, rich in knowledge, knows no pride,
Can boast ten tongues, and yet not satisfied.[3]

We find from a Russian review, written in May 1759, that the fame of her extensive linguistic acquirements in Latin, Greek, Hebrew, French, Italian, Spanish, and German had reached that country.[4] She published, when scarcely over twenty, a volume on Sight and Colour according to the Newtonian philosophy, contributed some papers to the 'Rambler' &c., translated Arrian and Epictetus, and was also well skilled in most feminine accomplishments. She was born at Deal, where her father was Rector, in 1717, and died in 1816. In her poems, written at various intervals between 1735 and 1795, and published in two volumes, there is no pretension to deep thought or great imaginative power, but a good deal of tranquil beauty. She constantly alludes to

[1] *B. Poets*, xi. 399.
[2] Boswell's *Johnson*, iv. 244.
[3] Hannah More's *Works*, xi. 384.
[4] Qu. in Mrs. Carter's *Life and Works*, ii. 417.

the calm of night or of evening, as if it had a special fascination for her. A feeling congenial with it pervades her verses, and gives them a subdued tone which is rather monotonous. There breathes throughout them all a gentle religious sentiment. An elegy, written something after the manner of Gray, beginning 'Silent and cool the dews of evening pale,' is one of the most pleasing of her compositions.

Nothing has been said hitherto of that great burst of hymnody to which the Methodist and Evangelical revival gave rise. Among these writers of hymns *Charles Wesley* stands of course pre-eminent. The number he wrote is something amazing. In more than forty different publications, exclusive of mere selections from former works, he sent out into the world, between 1738 and 1785, 4,100 hymns, and upwards of two thousand more were left at his death in manuscript.[1] Many of these must be placed in the highest order of devotional poetry. A widespread and passionate movement of feeling, of whatever kind it may be, rarely fails of evoking a poetical expression corresponding to it. But, as Isaac Taylor has observed, it certainly seems a remarkable providence that 'when myriads of uncultured and lately ferocious spirits were to be reclaimed, a gift of song such as that of Charles Wesley should have been conferred upon one of the company employed in the work.'[2] Without it, Methodism could scarcely have been the power that it was. When the voice of the great popular preachers no longer rang in the ear, and the ardent feeling they had stimulated was fading away, the hymns remained in the hands of the awakened hearers,—hymns differing almost in kind from any they had known before. 'It may be affirmed,' adds the author just quoted, 'that there is no principal element of Christianity, no main article of belief, as professed by Protestant Churches,—that there is no moral or ethical sentiment, peculiarly characteristic of the Gospel,—no height or depth of feeling proper to the spiritual life, that does not find itself emphatically and pointedly and clearly conveyed in some stanzas of Charles Wesley's hymns.'[3] John Wesley had no idea of their simply

[1] *Lyra Britannica*, C. Wesley. [2] *Wesley and Methodism*, 90.
[3] Id. 91.

constituting a part of Christian worship, as songs of adoration and praise. He expressly called them 'a body of experimental and practical divinity.'[1] They formed a sort of supplemental Liturgy, thoroughly consonant, as a whole, in tone and spirit to the familiar prayers which were heard in the parish churches (for the Wesleys—and Charles even more than his brother—were Churchmen to the backbone), but specially adapted to keep alive the new spiritual impulse which had produced such great effects. Personal and experimental like the Psalms of David, they were also penetrated with the most vivid Christian feeling; and if a few of them displayed a warmth of ardour which exceeded the ordinary bounds of sober religion, and disqualified them for being properly used in congregational worship, such incongruity would be less apparent in the more excited atmosphere of the class meeting. As appropriate to peculiar cases, words could scarcely be too glowing for those who felt that in very truth a new and heavenly life, of which they had before known nothing, had indeed been born anew in them. And Charles Wesley's hymns rarely offend by anything like the sentimentality and overwrought effusiveness which Watts sometimes permitted himself, and which were common in some of the Moravian ones. Very objectionable rhapsodies found their way into some of the Methodist hymn-books; but John Wesley, especially in his later years, was very careful to expunge these, so far as he could bring them under his censorship. In this, as in many other ways, Methodism owed not a little to the sound practical sense which never for long together forsook him. It owed scarcely less to the cultivated ear and refined taste which chastened the devout outpourings of his brother's poetic talent.

Southey has remarked of Wesley's hymns, that probably no poems have been so much treasured in the memory, or so frequently quoted on a death-bed.[2] As long as time lasts, many of them are sure to hold an honoured place as a part of the heritage of the Christian Church. 'Jesu! Lover of my soul,' is perhaps the favourite among them all. This exquisite hymn fully deserves the admiration it has universally

[1] John Wesley's Pref. to ed. of 1779.
[2] Referred to in *Oxford Essays*, 1858, p. 126.

obtained. John Wesley thought that the funeral hymn 'Come, let us join our friends above,' was the sweetest of all that his brother wrote.[1] Popular opinion is quite at one with him as to its merits. It is probably in almost all collections, but is less known by its first line than by some which follow, as for instance the verses beginning 'One family, we dwell in Him.' Another which he was particularly fond of, and 'which Watts, with great nobility of spirit, said was worth all the verses which he himself had ever written,'[2] is the sacred poem (for it is that rather than a hymn) upon the wrestling of Jacob with the Angel, 'Come, O thou traveller unknown.' Among his best known hymns may be mentioned also, 'Forth in Thy name, O Lord, I go,'—verses full of pure and sober piety,—'O Love divine, how sweet thou art,' 'Hark, the herald angels sing,'[3] 'Thou Judge of quick and dead,' 'The heavens declare Thy glory, Lord,' 'O for a thousand tongues to sing,' and 'Rejoice, the Lord is King.' A simple and very pretty hymn for children begins 'Gentle Jesus, meek and mild.' The last seven, which are also among the best, of its fourteen stanzas may be found in Sir Roundell Palmer's 'Book of Praise.'[4] It is a great recommendation to the hymns of both Wesleys, that although they are often mystical in tone, and appeal persistently to the feelings, they are thoroughly practical, never losing sight of active Christian morality.

The doctrine of progress to perfection has a large part in these hymns. It may be too sanguine a creed, and one that rests on insufficient foundations; it may be liable to the danger of encouraging self-delusion and presumption; but at all events, it is a tenet that contains many elements of a truly noble faith. However varied according to different minds the possible ideal may be towards which we should aspire to advance, the hope of a near approximation to it through the aid of a Divine grace—a hope too from which none are absolutely excluded—seems strongly adapted both

[1] Saunders, 321. [2] Id. 322.

[3] C. Wesley's own words, however, were—

'Hark, how all the welkin rings,
Glory to the King of kings.'

[4] No. cclxxxviii., 'Lamb of God, I look to Thee.'

to encourage nobler conceptions of what human nature can be enabled to do, and to elicit a more trustful and loving dependence upon the Power without whose support all such aspirations are vain.[1] But, without entering into the doctrinal question, it is at all events historically evident that the theory of Christian perfection exercised an immense influence on the minds both of John and Charles Wesley, and that it gives a marked general character to their hymns. Thus we find such lines as these—

Lord, I believe a rest remains
To all Thy people known ;
A rest where pure enjoyment reigns,
And Thou art loved alone ;—

A rest where all our soul's desire
Is fixed on things above ;
Where doubt, and pain, and fear expire,
Cast out by perfect love.[2]

John Wesley was careful, however, to add, in his preface to the hymns of 1742, that perfection does not exempt from ignorance, mistake, temptation, and a thousand necessary infirmities, nor did it dispense from any of the ordinances.

Some of the most beautiful of Charles Wesley's hymns, considered as devotional poems for private use, are noticeable for the quietist or semi-mystical tone of piety which pervades them. Of these the hymn beginning 'Christ, my hidden Life, appear,' is found in Sir R. Palmer's admirable selection.

Charles Wesley must not be passed without a reference to the last lines written to his dictation as he lay in extreme feebleness, a short time before his death :—

Jesus, my only hope Thou art,
Strength of my failing flesh and heart :
Oh, could I catch a smile from Thee,
And drop into Eternity ![3]

[1] The Wesleyan tenet, starting from a wholly individual point of view, may be compared with the no less invigorating opinion of a possible progress towards ultimate perfection on the part of the human race, as entertained by Wesley's contemporaries, W. Worthington (*Essays on Redemption*, 47) and Bishop Law (*Considerations on Religion*, advert. and pp. 205–22).

[2] Last hymn in vol. of 1741. Qu. in J. Wesley's 'Plain Account of Christian Perfection,' *Works*, xi. 382.

[3] F. Saunders' *Evenings* &c. 323.

John Wesley contributed some original hymns, but they are not distinguished from those which his brother wrote, and, with a few exceptions, it is not known which they are. All the translations from the German, twenty-nine in number, are his, as well as two from the French, and one from the Spanish. Some of these translations are very beautiful. Such, for instance, is the stanza which Richard Cobden is said to have repeated with his last breath :—

Thee will I love, my joy, my Crown,
Thee will I love, my Lord, my God:
Thee will I love beneath Thy frown
Or smile, Thy sceptre, or Thy rod:
What though my heart and flesh decay,
Thee shall I love in endless day.[1]

Such, again, is that from Paul Gerhardt, beginning—

Commit thou all thy griefs
And ways into His hands:
To His sure truth and tender care,
Who earth and heaven commands;[2]

or that from the German of Johan Scheffler, which begins and ends with the verse—

O God, of good the unfathom'd sea!
Who would not give his heart to Thee?
Who would not love Thee with his might?
O Jesu, Lover of mankind!
Who would not his whole soul and mind
With all his strength to Thee unite?[3]

Among his original hymns is a very fine one written upon the death of Whitefield :—

Servant of God, well done!
Thy glorious warfare's past!
The battle fought, the race is run,
And thou art crown'd at last.[4]

[1] S. W. Christopher, *Hymn Writers and their Hymns*, p. 16.
[2] Sir R. Palmer, *Book of Praise*, ccccvi.
[3] C. Rogers' *Lyra Britannica*, 624.
[4] C. B. Pearson, *Oxford Essays*, 1858, 149.

Among other Methodist writers must be mentioned first of all *William Williams* (1727–1791). He was a clergyman of the Church of England, and adhered to its communion.[1] Relinquishing the cure to which he had been ordained, he spent fifty years as an itinerant preacher in the Principality. The two hymns by which he is best known in England are, 'Guide me, O thou Great Jehovah,' and 'O'er those gloomy hills of darkness.' The latter is a fine missionary hymn; and both are from the Welsh, translated either by himself or by William Evans.[2]

Robert Seagrave, a Cambridge graduate, who joined the Methodist movement at an early stage, published his 'Hymns for Christian Worship' in 1742. Many of them are very indifferent, but there is one good hymn, entitled 'The Pilgrim's Song' ('Rise, my soul, and stretch thy wings.')

John Cennick (1717–1755) and *William Hammond* (d. 1783) were both Methodists for a time, and afterwards Moravians. The former published his hymns in 1741–4. There is much beauty in one or two of them, as:—

Children of the heavenly King,
As ye journey, sweetly sing;
Sing your Saviour's worthy praise,
Glorious in His works and ways.

We are travelling home to God,
In the way our fathers trod;
They are happy now, and we
Soon their happiness shall see.[3]

Hammond was one of the Cambridge Methodists, and a man of some scholarship. His hymns, published in 1745, are some of them much wanting in dignity. His best are, perhaps, the one beginning—

Awake, and sing the song
Of Moses and the Lamb,[4]

and a 'Veni Creator,' the first verse of which is—

Holy Spirit, gently come,
Raise us from our fallen state,

[1] Skeat's *Hist. of the Free Churches*, 406.
[2] C. Rogers' *Lyra Brit.* 630.
[3] Palmer, cxxvi.
[4] Id. cxxvii.

Fix Thy everlasting home
In the hearts Thou didst create!
Gift of God Most High!
Visit every troubled breast:
Light and Life and Love supply;
Give our spirits perfect rest![1]

Thomas Olivers (1725–99) was a shoemaker by trade, who had been converted from a dissolute life[2] by the preaching of Whitefield. As an assistant to Wesley, he was indefatigable in the itinerant ministry, travelling, it is said, no less than 100,000 miles on horseback in twenty-five years. He afterwards held a fixed appointment in Wesley's printing office. He was the author of a very fine hymn, or sacred poem, entitled 'The God of Abraham.' A musical service, by which he had been much impressed, at the Jewish Synagogue in Westminster, suggested it to him, and he obtained the ancient melody from Leoni, the presiding Rabbi.[3] Montgomery considered that there was not in our language 'a lyric of more majestic style, more elevated thought, or more glorious imagery.'[4] It is said to have had some influence in giving Henry Martyn an impulse to missionary work.[5] The following are three stanzas of it:—

The God of Abraham praise,
Who reigns enthroned above;
Ancient of everlasting days,
And God of love;
Jehovah, great I Am!
By earth and heaven confess'd;
I bow and bless the sacred name,
For ever bless'd.

. . . .

The God who reigns on high
The great archangels sing;
And 'Holy, holy, holy,' cry,
'Almighty King!
Who was and is the same,
And evermore shall be;

[1] Palmer, xcv.
[2] See a curious conversation with Toplady. Toplady's *Works*, vi. 172.
[3] *Lyra Br.*, note, 670. Saunders' *Evenings* &c. 328.
[4] Quoted by Saunders, id. [5] Id.

Jehovah—Father—great I Am!
We worship Thee.'

. . .

The whole triumphant host
Give thanks to God on high:
Hail, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
They ever cry:
Hail, Abraham's God and mine:
I join the heavenly lays;
All might and majesty are Thine,
And endless praise.[1]

Olivers' hymn, 'Lo! He comes with clouds descending,' may be found in Palmer's 'Book of Praise' side by side[2] with the finer and better-known version from Thomas of Celano, beginning with the same words, which Madan compiled out of an amalgamation of the compositions of Charles Wesley and Cennick.

John Bakewell (1721–1819) was another friend and co-adjutor of the Wesleys, as also of Toplady and others of the Evangelical party. The hymn by which he is most known is the one beginning 'Hail, Thou once despised Jesus.'[3]

John Berridge (1716–1793) was Vicar of Everton, and one of the most popular of the Methodist preachers. He did not, however, dissociate himself from the English Church. Like Rowland Hill, who looked up to him as a friend and valued counsellor, he was a man of eccentric temperament, but of profound piety and indefatigable zeal. His 'Sion's Songs' were published in 1785. Many of them are only versions of older compositions; one, for instance, of his best—

Jesus, cast a look on me,
Give me sweet simplicity[4]—

is altered from a hymn of Charles Wesley. Among those of which he was the sole author, the best is one which begins, 'O happy saints who dwell in light.'[5]

Commander Kempenfelt (1718–1782), of the 'Royal George,' was an associate of Whitefield and the Wesleys, and a hymn

[1] *Lyra Brit.* 450. *B. of Praise*, ccccxi. [2] Palmer, xc. and xci.
[3] *Lyra Brit.* 29. *B. of Praise*, lxxi. [4] *Lyra Brit.* 56. *B. of Praise*, cc.
[5] *Lyra Brit.* 57, and note, 664. *B. of Praise*, cxiii.

writer, as it appears, under the name of 'Philotheorus.' Three of his hymns are given in the 'Lyra Britannica.' The most striking of them is entitled 'The Alarm,' and begins—

Hark! 'tis the trump of God
Sounds through the realms abroad,
Time is no more![1]

Rowland Hill (1744–1833) was not what may be called a Methodist Churchman quite in the sense that the Wesleys, William Williams, Berridge, and others were. He was an ardent Calvinist, vehemently opposed to Wesley,[2] and holding opinions similar to those maintained by Whitefield among the Methodists, and Toplady among the Evangelicals. Notwithstanding the strong opposition which his Methodism excited, his attachment to the Church of England remained for a long time unabated. In 1773, three years after the time when he had been spoken of as Whitefield's probable successor, he was ordained to the curacy of Kingston in Somersetshire. He commenced itinerant preaching within a year afterwards, but it was not until 1780 that he contemplated the necessity of exercising his ministry outside the pale of the National Church.[3] To the last he never considered himself as altogether dissevered from it; but outliving as he did, by more than a generation, the final breach between it and Methodism which followed upon John Wesley's death, he could scarcely be regarded throughout all the latter years of his life as other than a Nonconformist. It was the misfortune, or the fault, of the Church of England that there was no provision in it for such men as he, although he was one of whom any Church might have been proud. 'The independent and ambiguous position which he assumed, as theoretically a Churchman, and practically a Dissenter,—a Dissenter within the Church, a Churchman among Dissenters![4]—was one that could not be recognised without such an extension in the system of the National Church as seems even yet unlikely to be carried out, and was still more unlikely then. The impressive, witty, and warm-hearted preacher of the

[1] *Lyra Brit.* 349. [2] Toplady's *Works*, vi. 172.
[3] V. J. Charlesworth, *Life and Sayings of Rowland Hill*, 34.
[4] *Cabinet Annual Register* for 1833, quoted in Id. 76.

Surrey Chapel could do something 'to lower the walls of partition,'[1] to remove prejudices, and to habituate his congregation not to the order only, but in a great degree to the spirit also, of the English liturgy. He could not do much more for a Church from which he had received much ill usage, but from which he never altogether withdrew his attachment.

One of Rowland Hill's best hymns—'We sing His love who once was slain'—was published in 1774, at the end of a sermon for the poor.[2] His 'Divine Hymns for Children' were designed as an appendix to those of Dr. Watts,[3] to which he was accustomed to attribute the strong religious impressions he had received while he was yet quite a child.[4] They were corrected by Cowper, and published in 1790. A Christmas hymn, the 39th, is perhaps the best, but they are all rather heavy, and not likely to be very attractive to the young. A hymn of some merit, beginning 'Exalted high at God's right hand,'[5] appeared in a collection published by him in 1783.

The impulse excited by the Methodist revival gave rise to many hymn writers in the ranks of Dissent. It must be sufficient, in this paper, to mention some of the principal ones.

Robert Robinson (1735–1790) had been moved to a religious life by the preaching of Whitefield. A Calvinistic Methodist at first, he passed through various phases of Baptist, Congregational, and Unitarian opinion.[6] The two hymns by which he is best known are, 'Come, thou fount of every blessing,'[7] and a Christmas hymn of much beauty, beginning, 'Mighty God, while angels bless Thee.'[8] To these may be added a third, assigned to him in Rippon's Collection, 'Christ the Lord is risen to-day.'[9]

Joseph Hart (1712–1768) published, in 1759, a book of original hymns which he prefaced with a remarkable sketch of his own spiritual experiences.[10] He tells how he was stirred

[1] Id. 60. [2] Josiah Miller, *Our Hymns*, 241.
[3] Preface to his *Divine Hymns*, second ed. 1794. [4] Charlesworth, 5.
[5] Palmer's *B. of Praise*, cxii. *Lyra Brit.* 309.
[6] *Lyra Brit.* 479. Saunders, 349.
[7] *Lyra Brit.* appendix, 671–2, and 680. [8] Id. 480.
[9] Rippon, J., *Selections of Hymns*, 1786, cxli.
[10] *Hymns composed on Various Subjects*, by J. Hart, containing a brief and summary account of the author, 1759.

in the midst of a licentious life by the preaching of Whitefield and the Moravians; how afterwards he entertained horrible ideas of liberty, and plunged into wild Antinomianism; and he gives a strange account, which might have been penned by Bunyan, of a fierce struggle between good and evil raging in an impassioned and hitherto uncontrolled nature, which has suddenly awakened to an intense perception of awful spiritual realities.[1] His hymns are sometimes, as might be expected, too personal, and occasionally they are too didactic. Moreover, they often assume the utter vileness of an 'unconverted' nature. But some of them glow with warmth and simple earnestness.

He was the author of a good hymn, 'Come, Holy Spirit, come; Let Thy bright beams arise,'[2] which is sometimes called the Methodist version of *Veni Creator*. Joseph Hart was, however, not a Methodist but an Independent, a community among whom his memory is much honoured.[3]

The poems and hymns of *Anne Steele* (1717–1778) were published by her in 1760, in two volumes, under the name of 'Theodosia.' She was the daughter of a Baptist minister, of whose uncle Burnet once said, when a clergyman complained that his parishioners left their parish church to hear him, 'Go, and preach better than Henry Steele, and the people will return.'[4] She bore with exemplary patience a life of much physical suffering; and her hymns, in some of which there is a good deal of subdued and plaintive beauty, bear the traces of it. Among the best are, 'Come, weary souls, with sin distress'd,'[5] 'Father, whate'er of earthly bliss,'[6] 'Far from these narrow scenes of night,' and 'O Thou, whose tender mercy hears.'[7]

Samuel Stennett (1727–1795) was a Baptist minister, a very worthy man, held in much respect by George III.,[8] as also by Romaine, Toplady, and other leading 'Evangelicals.'[9] Thirty-four original hymns were attached to his theological works, and he contributed some to Rippon's Selection.

[1] *Hymns composed on Various Subjects*, pref. vi–xv., and hymn 27.
[2] *Lyra Brit.* 273. Palmer's *B. of Praise*, xcviii.
[3] Saunders' *Evenings with the S. Poets*, 295.
[4] Saunders, 340.
[5] Rippon, cxvii. Ph. Schaff's *Christ in Song*.
[6] Saunders, 340.
[7] *Lyra Brit.* 523. *B. of Praise*, cclx. and cccxxxvi.
[8] *Lyra Brit.* 526.
[9] Skeat's *Hist. of the F. Ch.* 447.

Samuel Medley (1738–1799)—a midshipman at one time, but afterwards a Baptist minister—published, at different dates, a very considerable number of hymns.[1] Perhaps his best is one of the two selected by Sir Roundell Palmer, beginning, 'Dearest of names, our Lord, our King.'

The well-known hymn 'All hail the power of Jesu's name' is by *Edward Perronet*, who published his 'Occasional Verses' in 1785. He was a son of the vicar of Shoreham, associated with the Wesleys for some time, but afterwards became the minister of a thoroughly Dissenting congregation.[2]

Dr. Gibbons, a Congregationalist, published his 'Hymns adapted to Divine Worship' in 1784. He is the author of the following hymn for a time of trouble:—

To Thee, my God, whose presence fills
The earth, and seas, and skies,
To Thee, whose Name, whose heart is Love,
With all my powers I rise.

Troubles in long succession roll,
Wave rushes upon wave;
Pity, O pity my distress!
Thy child, Thy suppliant save!

O bid the roaring tempest cease;
Or give me strength to bear
Whate'er Thy holy will appoints,
And save me from despair!

To Thee, my God, alone I look,
On Thee alone confide;
Thou never hast deceiv'd the soul
That on Thy grace relied.

Though oft Thy ways are wrapt in clouds,
Mysterious and unknown,
Truth, Righteousness, and Mercy stand
The pillars of Thy throne.[3]

There were many other Nonconformist writers of hymns in the latter half of the eighteenth century. Among them may be mentioned *Christian Gregor*,[4] and other Moravian

[1] *Lyra Brit.* 397. [2] *Lyra Brit.* 459.
[3] *Lyra Brit.* 236. *B. of Praise*, cccxciv.
[4] Ph. Schaff's *Christ in Song.*

translators of German hymns:—*Benjamin Wallin*, a Baptist, who published his 'Evangelical Hymns and Songs' in 1750;[1] *Darracott*, a pupil and friend of Doddridge;[2] *John Needham*, a Baptist, whose 'Devotional and Moral Hymns' appeared in 1768;[3] *James Allen* (1734–1804), among whose 'Christian Songs' is a tolerably well-known hymn, entitled 'Worthy the Lamb.'[4] While at Cambridge he attached himself to Ingham, the most thorough High Churchman of the early Methodists, but afterwards became a member of the small sect called the Sandemanians. *Benjamin Beddome* (1717–1795) was a profuse writer of hymns which attain a respectable, but not a high level. Robert Hale edited, in 1817, as many as six hundred of them.[5] *James Boden*, *George Burder*, and *Jehoiada Brewer* were Congregationalist hymn writers of no great note. Two missionary hymns, 'Arm of the Lord, awake,' and 'Bright as the sun's meridian blaze,' and some general hymns of more than average merit, were published towards the end of the century by *W. Shrubsole*, who appears to have been a Nonconformist.[6] *John Fawcett* and *John Ryland* were Baptists. The former—one of the many who owed their first strong religious impressions to Whitefield's preaching—published a volume of hymns in 1782.[7] The latter was an Orientalist of some distinction, and an active promoter of missionary effort. He wrote some good hymns, especially one beginning 'Sovereign Ruler of the skies,' upon the text 'My times are in Thy hand.'[8] The 'Walworth Hymns,' 1792, were by *Joseph Swain*, also a Baptist.[9] *Ottwell Heginbotham*, a Congregationalist, published some hymns in the last year of the century.[10] *Henry Moore*, a pupil of Doddridge, was the author of some sacred poems of considerable merit, which did not, however, appear till after his death in 1802, when they were edited by Dr. Aikin.[11]

Among the friends and coadjutors of the Countess of Huntingdon—herself a writer of hymns—were two clergymen

[1] *Lyra Brit.* 571. [2] Doddridge's *Works*, iv. 522.
[3] *Lyra Brit.* 437. [4] Id. 20.
[5] Id. 53. Several of his occur in Rippon's Collection.
[6] Id. 502–5, 680. [7] Id. 225.
[8] Id. 488. *B. of Praise*, ccx., ccxi. [9] Id. 534.
[10] Id. 297, 669. [11] Id. 422. *B. of Praise*, ccclxii. Aikin's *Letters*, 295.

who remained to the last, notwithstanding many discouragements, true to the Church of England, One of them was *Walter Shirley*,[1] her cousin (1725–1786). Each of his three brothers succeeded in turn to the earldom of Ferrers. He held the living of Loughrea, co. Galway, and was a Calvinistic Evangelical preacher of great note both in England and Ireland. His well-known 'Sweet the moments rich in blessing,' was published in 1774 in Lady Huntingdon's hymn-book. The still more popular 'Lord, dismiss us with Thy blessing,' appeared the same year in the collections of Conyers and Harris.

The other was *Thomas Haweis* (1732–1820), a strong Calvinist, one of the Countess's chaplains,[2] and rector, for fifty-six years, of Aldwinkle in Northamptonshire. His 'Carmina Christo' was published in 1792, with a preface in which he lamented the wretched condition of psalmody in the English Church, spoke of his reverence and admiration for the Book of Common Prayer, and said what he thought hymn writers ought to aim at. 'I have wished, I fear, rather than have attained, to be pathetic without pomp, pointed without affectation, to speak the language of simplicity without meanness, and to be childlike without being childish.'[3] His best-known hymn is that beginning—

> O Thou, from whom all goodness flows,
> I lift my heart to Thee.

Among them are some upon the chief festivals of the Church, and many which take a midway position between hymns and metrical versions of the Psalms. They all show much genuine fervour of feeling, but, as a whole, are not very noteworthy.

Among those of the Evangelical party in the Church of England who had no direct connection with the movement which the Wesleys and Whitefield had set on foot, Toplady, Romaine, Newton, and Cowper, are all well known as hymn writers. Augustus Toplady, Vicar, first of Blagdon, afterwards of Broad Hembury, died in 1778, when he was only

[1] *Lyra Britannica*, 673.

[2] He was a principal founder of the London Missionary Society (Miller, *Our Hymns*).

[3] *Carmina Christo*, pref.

thirty-eight years old. He was a man of learning and talent, and gifted, it is said, with a fire and vivacity which made his preaching and conversation peculiarly impressive. A Calvinist of the most pronounced type, and holding his own views with passionate vehemence, he looked upon John Wesley as little better than Antichrist.[1] According to him, free-will was 'the gangrene which had vitiated the moral state of the country,' and Wesley was its arch-priest. Neither spared the other. Such violence of mutual denunciation was a weak point in the history of two good men.

Toplady's celebrity as a hymn writer would rest securely upon one only—that which Dr. Pusey has justly called 'the most deservedly popular hymn, perhaps the very favourite—very beautiful is it'[2]—'Rock of ages, cleft for me.' There is no hymn better known or more highly valued in the homes of the poor; and the most cultivated and refined intellect may well fail to recall words on which it can repose so gladly in the hour when strength fails, and the unseen world is near. Next, perhaps, in beauty to this memorable hymn are two sacred poems, one entitled 'The dying believer to his soul' ('Deathless principle, arise'), the other a 'Meditation written in illness ('When languor and disease invade'), both of them glowing throughout with 'the joy of believing.' His 'Christ, whose glory fills the skies,' is a good and well-known morning hymn. 'I saw, and lo! a countless throng,' a contemplation on Rev. vii. 9–17, is a fine ode. 'Holy Ghost, dispel our sadness,' is a variation from the German, in a stately measure, enriched with double rhymes.

Toplady's hymns have many faults. His rhymes are often extremely careless. In one hymn we find 'own' rhyming with 'begun,'—'given' with 'heaven,'—'Saviour' with 'ever,'—'Creator' with 'nature,'—'seals' with 'dispels,' &c. Nor is this at all an exceptional example. He is apt to employ a variety

[1] Thus we find Toplady writing of Wesley as follows:—'O that He, in whose hand the hearts of all men are, may make even this opposer of grace a monument of almighty power to save! God is witness how earnestly I wish it may consist with the divine will to touch the heart and open the eyes of that unhappy man. I hold it as much my duty to pray for his conversion as to expose the futility of his writings against the truths of the Gospel.'—Toplady to Taylor, Nov. 27, 1772. *Works*, vi. 158.

[2] Quoted in *Oxford Essays*, 1858, 143.

of confused metaphors; sometimes he uses expressions which offend by their want of taste; and occasionally he does not scruple to use an Alexander Selkirk metre which is particularly disagreeable to the ear when adapted to sacred subjects. Apart from all question whether statements of peculiar dogmatic views are not prosaic and inappropriate as introduced into a hymn, what solemnity can there be in such a jingle as the following?

A debtor to mercy alone,
Of covenant mercy I sing;
Nor fear, with Thy righteousness on,
My person and off'rings to bring.[1]

But when Toplady was bent upon instilling the special opinions of that school of religious thought to which he belonged, he had little thought for metre, rhyme, or melody. It seems inconceivable that the author of 'Rock of ages' could also write the following:—

Imputatively guilty then
Our Substitute was made,
That we the blessings might obtain
For which His blood was shed.[2]

Many of his hymns are wholly disqualified for general use by his uncompromising Calvinism.

Reference has already been made to the indignation felt by *William Romaine* (1714–1795) that the Psalms of David should be in any way supplanted in Church use by what he called 'man's poetry,' 'human compositions.' Holding these views, the worthy Evangelical clergyman was of course not a hymn writer. He was, however, very desirous that congregational psalmody should be improved; and hoped to contribute to this by a new version, in which each Sunday in the Church year should have suitable portions of the Psalms appropriated to it.[3] Consequently he did not versify the whole of every Psalm. His rendering contrasts strongly both in its best features and its defects with that of James Merrick. There is often a

[1] Toplady's *Works*, vol. vi. hymn 9. [2] Id., hy. 13.
[3] *Psalms by Romaine and Cumberland, suited for every Sunday in the Year*, 1775.

certain roughness and want of finish in it; often, on the other hand, a simplicity which is pleasing.[1]

John Newton (1725–1807) was a man of no ordinary experiences. A special interest is conferred on the Olney Hymns by the remembrance that the benevolent Evangelical clergyman, who was the author of the majority of them, had been in earlier years among the worst of those who were engaged in the infamous slave trade on the Guinea coast.[2]

Newton's preface to the Olney Hymns, published 1779, is very modest. His share in the work, he said, would have been far smaller had the original design been carried out. It had been a source of keen regret to him that his friend Cowper had been prevented, 'by a long and affecting indisposition,' from contributing a much larger proportion of the hymns. For his own part, he added, he was a versifier, not a poet. His hymns were only for plain people,—'Though I would not offend readers of taste by a wilful coarseness and negligence, I do not write professedly for them. If the Lord whom I serve has been pleased to favour me with that mediocrity of talent which may qualify me for usefulness to the weak and the poor of His flock, without quite disgusting persons of superior attainment, I have reason to be satisfied.'[3]

He was certainly quite right in judging of himself that he was no poet. The great majority of his hymns are entirely deficient of anything that approaches to distinct poetical merit. Undoubtedly, even in this respect, there is a very wide interval between his best[4] and his worst. Some of the former are by no means unworthy of their place by the side of Cowper's; some of the latter descend, as poetical compositions, into the level of mere doggerel. Thus—to take a verse in which a mere incident of Bible history is referred to—we read in a hymn based upon the life of Joseph,—

[1] The second part of the 22nd Psalm (for use on Good Friday) is an excellent example of this.

[2] It was a period, however, in which occasional fits of bitter remorse and excited religious feelings were succeeded by relapses into utter recklessness of profligate living.—J. Newton's *Authentic Narrative*.

[3] *Memoirs*, 523.

[4] The last two lines of his finest hymn are very melodious—in full harmony with the thought they express:

'And may the music of Thy name
Refresh my soul in death.'

Though greatly distressed before,
When charg'd with purloining the cup,
They now were confounded much more;
Not one of them dared to look up.[1]

When the subject treated is of a more sacred and solemn nature—as in the 9th hymn of the 3rd book—the use of language in which there is no sense of dignity of expression becomes more positively offensive. His best hymns are of course free from such fault. Among these, the familiar one beginning 'How sweet the name of Jesus sounds,'[2] takes the first place; next to it one scarcely less well known, 'Come, my soul, thy suit prepare.'[3] There are several others, some of which contain verses very indifferent in point of composition, but which have deservedly attained a good deal of popularity from the depth[4] or tenderness of their religious feeling. Such are those beginning, 'One there is above all others;'[5] 'Glorious things of Thee are spoken;'[6] 'Time by moments steals away;'[7] 'Safely through another week;'[8] 'Now let us join with hearts and tongues;'[9] a short hymn, too, should be mentioned which is often sung at the close of service, 'May the grace of Christ our Saviour.'[10] A hymn which surpasses in some respects all others that he ever wrote, is assigned in 'The Book of Praise' to Cowper. This must be a mistake. In Cecil's edition of Cowper's life and works it is certainly not marked with the distinctive C. But it is one that Cowper might well have written:—

Sometimes a light surprises
The Christian while he sings;
It is the Lord who rises
With healing in His wings;

[1] *Olney Hymns*, book i. hy. 12. [2] Id. i. 57. [3] Id. i. 31.

[4] The following are the words of a writer whom the character of J. Newton had impressed with very high respect:—'So valuable are some of Newton's hymns, from their deep knowledge of the human heart, their experience of our wants, and their application to our need, that probably no hymns have ever been written which have given greater help to depressed and anxious minds.'—J. C. Colquhoun's *W. Wilberforce, his Friends and Times*, 91. The *Olney Hymns*, especially that by Newton beginning 'Why should I fear the darkest hour?' were a special solace to that pure and noble spirit, Augustus Hare, in his last days. (*Memorials of a Quiet Life*, ii. 32.)

[5] *Olney Hymns*, i. 53. [6] Id. i. 60. [7] Id. ii. 3.
[8] , ii. 40. [9] Id. iii. 39. [10] Id. iii. 101.

When comforts are declining,
He grants the soul again
A season of clear shining,
To cheer it after rain.

In holy contemplation
We sweetly then pursue
The theme of God's salvation,
And find it ever new:
Set free from present sorrow,
We cheerfully can say,
E'en let the unknown to-morrow
Bring with it what it may.

It can bring with it nothing
But He will bear us through,
Who gives the lilies clothing
Will clothe His people too;
Beneath the spreading heavens
No creature but is fed;
And He who feeds the ravens
Will give His children bread.

Though vine nor fig-tree neither
Their wonted fruit shall bear,
Though all the field should wither,
Nor flocks nor herds be there;
Yet God the same abiding,
His praise shall tune my voice,
For while in Him confiding,
I cannot but rejoice.[1]

Several of Newton's hymns are too entirely reflections on his own personal experiences to be at all adapted for general use. A similar remark may be made of the striking and well-known meditation, admissible only as a hymn for private use, beginning "'Tis a point I long to know.'[2]

Many of his more didactic poems upon Scripture incidents and parables have merit of their own, if they are regarded not as hymns, which they scarcely are, nor as poetical compositions, which they scarcely pretend to be, but as short spiritual tales in verse, which people of little education might read with interest as such. That he had some such idea in his

[1] *Olney Hymns*, iii. 48. [2] Id. i. 119.

mind is the more probable from his having included among his hymns two or three sacred fables—the Loadstone, the Spider and the Bee, and the Tamed Lion.

It has been noticed as a remarkable and significant omission that, although a whole section of hymns is entitled 'Ordinances,' there is no mention whatever among them of the sacrament of baptism.[1]

Cowper contributed sixty-eight of the Olney hymns, about a quarter of the whole collection. As a whole, they are by no means equal to much of his other poetry. The gloom, the narrowness, the austerity of his theology, are naturally more apparent in them than in poems where his religious ideas are less prominently expressed. On the other hand, there is in the best of them a plaintive tenderness, an elevation of sentiment, and a purity of tone, which are no less characteristic of the gentle and devout spirit of their author. Moreover, Cowper was not always bowed down with despondent fears about his spiritual state. The cloud which hung over him sometimes passed away and left him in the enjoyment of a calm and trustful happiness. In such a mood, he composed one of the most beautiful of all hymns that have ever been written. Each of the two writers had chosen the same text for their subject—'Lovest thou Me?' There was a singular contrast in the mode of handling it. Newton's hymn took the form of an anxious argument with himself whether he did indeed love God or no, whether he were His or whether he were not. Cowper's 'Hark, my soul! it is the Lord'—which many of the readers of 'Hymns Ancient and Modern' will have been glad to find introduced into the last edition—is that which contains those exquisite verses:—

> Can a woman's tender care
> Cease toward the child she bare?
> Yes, she may forgetful be,
> Yet will I remember Thee.
>
> Mine is an unchanging love,
> Higher than the heights above,
> Deeper than the depths beneath,
> Free and faithful, strong as death.
>
> . . . . .

[1] C. B. Pearson, in *Oxford Essays*, 1858, 145.

Lord, it is my chief complaint,
That my love is weak and faint;
Yet I love Thee and adore:
O for grace to love Thee more![1]

But the frequent tone of Cowper's hymns is that of one who feels himself 'tempest tossed and half a wreck,' clinging with pathetic tenacity to a hope which often seems scarcely sufficient to save him from despair.

The billows swell, the winds are high,
Clouds overcast my wintry sky;
Out of the depths to Thee I call—
My fears are great, my strength is small.[2]

He feels desolate in spirit and God-forsaken, lost in the night, and beset by mysterious enemies.

My soul is sad and much dismayed;
See, Lord, what legions of my foes,
With fierce Apollyon at their head,
My heavenly pilgrimage oppose![3]

Powers of darkness are around him, and his soul is dark within. And yet—

I see, or think I see,
A glimm'ring from afar;
A beam of day that shines for me,
To save me from despair.[4]

All his best hymns are in the minor key of prayerful submission to a sovereign Will, and of earnest longing for deliverance from an innate sinfulness which might yet be too strong for him. Among these may be mentioned those beginning 'Oh, for a closer walk with God,'[5] 'God of my life, to Thee I call;'[6] 'What various hindrances we meet;'[7] 'The billows swell;'[8] 'God moves in a mysterious way;'[9] 'There is

[1] *Olney Hymns*, book i. 118.
[2] Id. iii. 18.
[3] Id. iii. 20.
[4] Id. iii. 8.
[5] Id. i. 3.
[6] Id. iii. 119.
[7] Id. ii. 60.
[8] Id. iii. 18.
[9] Id. iii. 15. 'The history of this hymn is remarkable. In an interval of derangement Cowper thought it was the Divine will that he should go to a certain part of the river Ouse and drown himself; but the driver of the vehicle,

a fountain;'[1] 'O Lord, my best desire fulfil,'[2] and that in which he declared his purpose of retiring from a world which seemed to him crowded with spiritual dangers.

Far from the world, O Lord, I flee
From strife and tumult far;
From scenes where Satan wages still
His most successful war.[3]

Cowper's translations of the fervid but quietistic and somewhat unpractical hymns of Madame Guyon arose out of a cause which forcibly exhibits the sad religious dejection which he could never for long together overcome. 'Ask no hymns,' he wrote, 'from a man suffering by despair as I do. I could not sing the Lord's song, banished as I am, not to a strange land, but to a remoteness from His presence, in comparison with which the distance from east to west is no distance, is vicinity and cohesion. I dare not, either in prose or verse, allow myself to express a frame of mind which I am conscious does not belong to me; least of all can I venture to use the language of absolute resignation, lest only counterfeiting, I should for that very reason be taken strictly at my word, and lose all my remaining comfort. Can there not be found among those translations of Madame Guyon somewhat that might serve the purpose?. . . I have no objection to giving the graces of the foreigner an English dress, but insuperable ones to all false pretences and affected exhibitions of what I do not feel.'[4] It is well known that the distressing hypochondriasis, under which the poet suffered, increased upon him in later years, and that death alone released him from it. His last original verses, dated March 20, 1799, are sad in the extreme. He entitled them 'The Castaway.' He describes the loss of a sailor in one of Anson's voyages—

Obscurest night involved the sky,
The Atlantic billows roar'd,
When such a destin'd wretch as I
Wash'd headlong from a board,

missing his way, diverted him from his purpose; and thereupon were composed those memorable lines.'—Saunders, 346.

[1] *Olney Hymns*, book i. 79.
[2] Id. iii. 19.
[3] Id. iii. 45.
[4] H. Stebbing's *Life of Cowper*, ii.

Of friends, of hope, of all bereft,
His floating home for ever left.

And the piteous concluding lines are—

No voice divine the storm allay'd,
No light propitious shone;
When, snatch'd from all propitious aid,
We perish'd, each alone:
But I beneath a rougher sea,
And whelm'd in deeper gulfs than he.[1]

The Calvinistic theology seems to suit some temperaments. Newton, Cowper's friend and constant associate, declared, in his preface to their joint hymns, that 'these doctrines were essential to his peace. He could not live comfortably a day or an hour without them.'[2] Never was a truer instance of the old proverb of one man's meat being another man's poison. Predestinarianism was an unhappy creed for a timid and morbidly sensitive spirit like that of the retiring poet.[3]

Before passing from the hymnists of the latter part of the eighteenth century, a few others should yet be mentioned. *Martin Madan* and *Mrs. Cowper* were both cousins of William Cowper. To the former is owed the generally adopted variation from Charles Wesley and Cennick's, 'Lo! He comes with clouds descending.'[4] *Robert Hawker* (1754–1830), vicar of a parish in Plymouth, was author of two hymns quoted in the 'Lyra Britannica'—one upon the name 'Abba, Father,' the other upon the word 'Amen.'[5] *Joseph Carlyle* (1759–1805) was professor of Arabic in Cambridge, and vicar of Newcastle. He was the writer of 'Lord, when we bend before Thy throne.'[6] *Bishop Horne*, best known by his Commentary, was the

[1] Cowper's *Minor Poems*. [2] J. Newton's *Works*, p. 524.

[3] After reading a second time what my friend and colleague has said on this subject (p. 195), I hesitate, at the last moment, about retaining this paragraph. I let it stand, as thinking it substantially correct. I do not dissent from Mr. Overton's remarks upon the character of J. Newton's Calvinism, and upon his influence on Cowper's mind. I also think he makes it clear that the poet was not a Calvinist in the technical sense of the word. He believed he had once enjoyed God's grace. But, practically, the gloom of feeling himself 'a destined wretch,' do what he would, appears to me quite undistinguishable from the terrible belief in reprobation. I doubt not that, in his darker hours, Cowper fully accepted that doctrine.

[4] *Lyra Br.* 648, 656, 675. Palmer's *B. of Praise*, xc.

[5] *Lyra Br.* 288. [6] Id. 126.

author of a few hymns ; *Bishop Lowth* of some versions from the Psalms.[1] The hymn 'Jesus, and can it ever be,' was written in 1776 by *Thomas Green*, of Ware, when he was only ten years old.[2]

John Newton's vicar and predecessor at Olney was Moses Brown, who is spoken of as 'an evangelical minister and a good man.'[3] The vicarage of Olney was only 50*l.* a year; and Moses Brown had a family of thirteen children. His pecuniary difficulties being, therefore, very great, he was glad to accept the chaplaincy of Morden College, Blackheath,[4] and Newton succeeded to the cure. He was at one time much disappointed at not becoming Poet Laureate.[5] Certainly the tenure of this office did not, in the eighteenth century, imply any considerable poetical gift. Brown might have filled it quite as worthily as some who had held it before him. But he was only a very moderate poet. His poem on the Universe and his 'Sunday Thoughts' received much praise, and the latter passed through at least four editions. But the circulation must have been almost entirely among a number of worthy people who cared little for the poetical in comparison with the religious merit of his poems. They were instructive and orthodox, mildly evangelistic, tolerant, except to Rome, suffused with a quiet appreciation of natural beauty, and appropriate, yet not too heavy, for Sunday reading. 'I hope,' wrote James Hervey, 'Divine Providence will give his "Sunday Thoughts" an extensive spread, and make them an instrument of diffusing the savour of true religion. Seldom, if ever, have I seen a treatise that presents the reader with so full yet concise a view, so agreeable yet striking a picture of true Christianity in its most important articles, and most distinguishing peculiarities. Though I am utterly unacquainted with the author' (they afterwards became intimate), 'I assure myself he is no novice in the sacred school.'[6] The 'Sunday Thoughts' were first published in 1750: a fourth part, including some hymns, or 'Night Songs,' was added in 1781.

[1] *Oxford Essays*, 1858, 142. [2] Saunders, 349.
[3] Cecil's *Memoirs of J. Newton*, 41.
[4] Id., and James Hervey's *Works*, vi. 270.
[5] M. Brown's *Sunday Thoughts*, fourth ed. 1781, part 3, 984–6.
[6] Jas. Hervey's *Works*, vi. 47.

Cowper was for some time under the care of *Dr. Nathaniel Cotton* (1707–1788), who kept a private establishment of high repute for persons of deranged intellect. The poet used to speak of him with the utmost gratitude, as a physician whose humanity was equal to his skill, and who was as capable of administering to the spiritual as to the physical maladies of his patients.[1] He was a man also of some literary note. His 'Visions in Verse,' published about 1751, attained a good deal of popularity, and deserved it, not as having any great poetical merit, but as embodying in smooth, easy-flowing measure the ideas of a sensible, benevolent, and religious mind. Each vision is a kind of allegory, in which some personified quality, such as Pleasure, Health, Friendship, &c., is the principal character. Among Cotton's other poetical productions are a few hymns, one of which, beginning 'If solid happiness,' ends with this bright verse,—

> For conscience, like a faithful friend,
> Shall through the gloomy vale attend
> To aid our dying breath;
> And faith shall fix our thankful eye
> Beyond the reach of death.[2]

Hitherto, Cowper has only been spoken of in this paper as one among the hymn writers of the latter half of the eighteenth century. It would be beyond the limits of the subject to remark upon his general merits as a poet. But in all his principal writings the religious element is strongly marked. With two or three unimportant exceptions, all his poems date from a period when religious convictions had for a long time become altogether the controlling principle of his life. His genius was late in ripening. He was fifty years old before he was known as a poet.

The best and most characteristic features of Cowper's poetry are very closely related to the strong Christian feeling which actuated him. Without it, his writings might not have been deficient in sweetness and pathos; but they would have been deprived of that which conferred upon them those higher qualities which made his poems a turning-point in eighteenth-

[1] Cowper's poem on 'Hope;' Cowper's *Letters*, July 4, 1765; Cecil's *Memoirs of Newton*, 45; Chalmers's *Life of Cotton*, 5.

[2] This hymn is not in Chalmers's edition. It is from Patrick's *Collection*, 1786.

century literature. His thorough earnestness, his transparent simplicity of moral aim, his devoted love of all goodness, his shrinking aversion from all forms of evil, his lively sense of a divine purpose and significance in all created works—these principles, operating in a sensitive and poetical temperament, were just what was wanted to give his poetry that simplicity, reality, and vigour which contrasts most favourably with the formalities and artificial graces which had been too popular before. It may be added that unaffected elevation of moral sentiment, such as that which in Cowper was based upon pure religious feeling, gives a beauty to poetry which is almost indispensable to its highest charm.

The defects of Cowper's theology are easily separable from the solid core of Christian love and faith to which they are attached. But they too, as was inevitable in a nature such as his, have left a strong impress on his poetry. Cowper has condemned Puritanism in strong words as dark and sullen, as harsh, intolerant, and severe, without smile, sweetness, or grace. In his own mind, as it is reflected both in his poems and in his letters, there is constantly a tenderness, a gentle gaiety, a perception of humour, which is quite the reverse of Puritan moroseness. Yet he was continually falling into the same extreme which he has censured. His poetry is never so unattractive as where it is made expressive of the severe and confined views of life peculiar to the school of religious thought in which his ideas were moulded. He is often very intolerant and precise. His own home, were it not for the constitutional morbidness which religious fears aggravated, but had not occasioned, would have been a very Eden in the midst of a sinful world. And living as he did, a recluse, in the pure and harmless round of his occupations, amid the tranquil pleasures of his garden and the country, his books, his painting, his own delicate and refined thoughts, his hares, his bird-cages, among friends who loved him, and among the poor to whom he was enabled to be an almoner as well as a kind and compassionate friend, ever walking truly with his God, he was impatient that the world in general could not live after a like pattern, and had small indulgence for its sins, and scanty sympathy for its weaknesses. He thought with something like horror of the life of cities

humming with a restless crowd,
Sordid as active, ignorant as loud,
Whose highest praise is that they live in vain,
The dupes of pleasure, or the slaves of gain;
Where works of man are cluster'd close around,
And works of God are hardly to be found.[1]

There seemed to him something radically wrong in such conditions of existence for "a creature formed for God alone and for heaven's high purposes,' and he used all his powers as a Christian satirist to inveigh against them. Cowper was not wanting in sound practical sense and masculine power of reflection. He could lash irreligion and vice with a force and purity of tone which cannot fail to carry with it the sympathy of the reader. When, however, he descends to pass sentence upon trivial follies, or to speak of pursuits and pleasures which are simply not congenial to himself, he often loses all sense of proportion, and becomes the mere bigot. The best and wisest of counsellors is listened to with impatience if he declaims against pleasures which become noxious only by unreasonable or immoderate use, if cards and dancing are denounced as crimes,[2] hunting as vulgarest brutality,[3] and he who would play a game of chess is asked how he can 'waste attention on the chequered board,' and concentrate his mind upon a trivial game, 'as if eternity were hung In balance on his conduct of a pin?'[4] Yet when the poet passed on to speak of those who devote themselves to grave studies of man or nature, he was more than ever dazed by theological contempt, more than ever the zealot.

I sum up half mankind
And add two-thirds of the remaining half,
And find the total of their hopes and fears
Dreams, empty dreams. The million flit as gay
As if created only like the fly,
That spreads his motley wings in the eye of noon,
To sport their season and be seen no more.
The rest are sober dreamers, grave and wise,
And pregnant with discoveries new and rare.

[1] 'Retirement.'
[2] 'Progress of Error.'
[3] Id., and 'Conversation.'
[4] 'The Task,' book vi.

Then follow a score or two of lines in which he pours contempt upon the 'seeming wisdom,' the 'airy reveries,' the 'plausible amusements,' the idle labours of the historian, the geologist, the astronomer.

> And thus they spend
> The little wick of life's poor, shallow lamp
> In playing tricks with Nature, giving laws
> To distant worlds, and trifling in their own.[1]

Much in the same style of thought is his impassioned tirade against the 'pride' of those who refuse to acknowledge that man is by nature so dead in sin as not to possess some native beams of rectitude, some inborn love of virtue.[2] It was unfortunate that a poet like Cowper, whose religious influence on cultivated minds might have been so considerable, should have imbibed the mischievous persuasion that, to enhance the blessings of divine grace and the preciousness of Christian morals, all other elements of human nature must be depreciated and disparaged.

Apart from this, the religious thought that enters into Cowper's general poetry is often exceedingly beautiful. However much, in his darker hours, he might doubt whether he had any right to its joy, he never doubted that a Christian's faith was as rich in happiness as in holiness. All nature glowed to such an one with more than earthly brightness.

> He is the freeman whom the truth makes free.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> His are the mountains, and the valleys his,
> And the resplendent rivers: his to enjoy
> With a propriety that none can feel,
> But who with filial confidence inspired
> Can lift to heaven an unpresumptuous eye,
> And smiling say, 'My Father made them all!'
> Are they not his by a peculiar right,
> And by an emphasis of interest his,
> Whose eye they fill with tears of holy joy,
> Whose heart with praise, and whose exalted mind
> With worthy thoughts of that unwearied love
> That plann'd, and built, and still upholds, a world

[1] 'The Task,' book iii., and 'Charity,' towards the middle.
[2] 'Truth,' near the close.

So cloth'd with beauty for rebellious man?

. . . . . .

Acquaint thyself with God, if thou wouldst taste
His works. Admitted once to His embrace,
Thou shalt perceive that thou wast blind before.
Thine eye shall be instructed; and thine heart
Made pure shall relish, with divine delight
Till then unfelt, what hands divine have brought.[1]

. . . . . .

Happy who walks with Him! whom what he finds
Of flavour or of scent in fruit or flower,
Or what he views of beautiful or grand
In nature, from the broad, majestic oak
To the green blade that twinkles in the sun,
Prompts with remembrance of a present God.
His presence, who made all so fair, perceiv'd,
Makes all still fairer. As with him no scene
Is dreary, so with him all seasons please.[2]

The poems of *Hannah More* (1744-1833) derive, no doubt, their chief value from the spirit which animates them. They are the verses of a refined and most benevolent woman, whose influence was great, and whose talents were exerted with a Christian-hearted purpose of doing good. Her poetical were almost as popular as her prose works. It is true their sale was in many instances very much promoted by the zeal of some good people, who believed that in the excited and anxious times which witnessed the outbreak of the French Revolution, her writings, full as they are of high principle, tact, and sound sense, were calculated to be of great service. In any case, they were widely read and much admired. Her poem, for instance, on 'Sensibility,' although weighted rather than not by the 'Sacred Dramas' with which, in 1783, it was published, went through nineteen editions.[3] Sensibility, in her meaning of the word, was a quickness of moral perception especially to those simple but precious virtues of domestic life which Christian charity demands. The poem is chiefly addressed to girls growing up to womanhood. Yet it is not so much a poem as an essay written in pleasing verse.

[1] 'The Task,' book v. near close. [2] Id. vi.
[3] *Hannah More's Memoirs*, by W. Roberts, i. 184 (note).

Among her devotional poetry may be mentioned a hymn for midnight, and a pleasant though rather prosaic Christmas hymn, in nineteen stanzas, beginning :

> Oh how wondrous is the story
> Of our blest Redeemer's birth !
> See the mighty Lord of glory
> Leaves His heaven to visit earth.[1]

The following sensible and characteristic lines occur in one of the 'Solitary Musings,' of which the first line is, 'Lord, when dejected I appear.'

> O wayward heart ! thine is the blame ;
> Though I may change, God is the same.
> Not feebler faith, nor colder prayer,
> My state and sentence shall declare ;
> Not nerves and feelings shall decide—
> By safer signs I shall be tried.
> Is the fixed tenor of my mind
> To Christ and righteousness inclined ?[2]

Nor should her religious tales and ballads be passed over without notice. Many of them were adapted to popular tunes, and widely dispersed as tracts and broadsheets. The following is a part of the conversation entitled, 'Turn the Carpet,' or 'The Two Weavers :'

> Says John, Thou say'st the thing I mean,
> And now I hope to cure thy spleen ;
> The world, which clouds thy soul with doubt,
> Is but a carpet inside out.
>
> As when we view these shreds and ends,
> We know not what the whole intends ;
> So when on earth things look but odd,
> They're working still some scheme of God.
>
> No plan or pattern can we trace,
> All wants proportion, truth, and grace ;
> The motley mixture we deride,
> Nor see the beauteous upper side.

[1] Hannah More's *Works*, xi. 54. [2] Id. 41.

But when we reach that world of light,
And view those works of God aright,
Then shall we see the whole design,
And own the workman is divine.[1]

Some of Hannah More's best verses were written in 1788, upon the slave trade. They were verses well calculated to stir the conscience of her readers. Especially she inveighed against 'the proud philosophy,' which affected to deny to the negro race a common share in the powers of our joint humanity. And earnestly she pleaded against the iniquitous inconsistency of slavery in a land of liberty—

Shall Britain, where the soul of freedom reigns,
Forge chains for others she herself disdains.
Forbid it, Heaven! O let the nations know
The liberty she tastes she will bestow.[2]

There is much religious pathos in the following:—

And if some notions, vague and undefin'd,
Of future terrors have assail'd thy mind;
If such thy masters have presum'd to teach—
As terrors only they are prone to preach—
(For should they paint Eternal Mercy's reign,
Where were th' oppressor's rod, the captive's chain?)
If then thy troubled soul has learn'd to dread
The dark unknown thy trembling footsteps tread—
On Him who made thee what thou art depend;
He who withholds the means accepts the end.
Thy mental night thy Saviour will not blame;
He died for those who never heard His name.
Not thine the reckoning dire of light abus'd,
Knowledge disgraced, and liberty misus'd.[3]

In fact, the better poetry of the age was all, greatly to its credit, on the side of freedom and humanity—prompt alike to animate Wilberforce in his exertions, and to console and encourage him under the partial failure which at first awaited his efforts. James Hurdis, in 1788, entreated his countrymen to put away from them a guilt which would surely bring righteous vengeance upon them.[4] In 1792, Cowper

[1] Hannah More's *Works*, 17.
[2] Id. xi. 119.
[3] Id. 117.
[4] Hurdis, Jas., *Poems*, iii. 92.

addressed a noble sonnet to Wilberforce, bidding him not to be disheartened—

> Friend of the poor, the wronged, the fetter-gall'd,
> Fear not lest labour such as thine be vain.[1]

Mrs. Barbauld dedicated a poem to him on the same occasion.[2] James Montgomery not only wrote, but suffered imprisonment in the cause, through the offence which his unguarded vehemence had given.[3] Southey, in 1794, dedicated to the subject some of his early sonnets and lyrics—verses glowing with indignation.[4] Coleridge, in the same year, denounced the wrath that must thunder from the Holy One:

> where hideous Trade
> Loud laughing packs his bales of human anguish.[5]

Campbell, in the last year of the century, wrote a fine apostrophe to Nature outraged by the wicked institution:—

> Eternal Nature! when thy giant hand
> Had heav'd the floods, and fixed the trembling land,
> When life sprang startling at thy plastic call,
> Endless her forms, and man the lord of all!
> Say, was that lordly form inspired by thee
> To wear eternal chains and bow the knee?
> Was man ordain'd the slave of man to toil,
> Yoked with the brutes, and fettered to the soil;
> Weighed in a tyrant's balance with his gold?
> No! Nature stamp'd us in a heavenly mould!
> She bade no wretch his thankless labour urge,
> Nor, trembling, take the pittance and the scourge!
> No homeless Lybian, on the stormy deep,
> To call upon his country's name and weep![6]

James Hurdis (1763–1801), whose verses on slavery have been referred to, was a Fellow of Magdalene College, and curate of Burwash in Sussex; afterwards vicar of Bishopstone, and Professor of Poetry at Oxford. His gentle refinement, his

[1] Cowper's *Poems*, 'Sonnet to William Wilberforce.'

[2] Barbauld's *Works* (Aikin), i. 173, 'Epistle to W. Wilberforce.'

[3] *Montgomery, Jas., Memoirs of*, by J. Holland and Jas. Everett, 166, and pref. to *Poetical Works*, i. xxvii.

[4] Southey's *Poetical Works*, 'Poems concerning the Slave Trade' (1794), ii. 56.

[5] S. T. Coleridge's *Poetical Works*, 'Religious Musings,' i. 87.

[6] 'Pleasures of Hope.'

cultivated love of Nature, his bright unclouded piety, make him one of the most charming of eighteenth-century poets. He was not, in the stricter sense of the word, a writer of sacred poetry, but a vein of pure Christian feeling runs through all he wrote; as when musing on the resuscitation of all Nature in the spring, he exclaims—

> But I shall live again,
> And still on that sweet hope shall my soul feed.
> A medicine it is, which with a touch
> Heals all the pains of life; a precious balm,
> Which makes the tooth of sorrow venomless,
> And of her hornet sting so keen disarms
> Cruel Adversity.[1]

Anna Lætitia Barbauld[2] (1743–1825) might have been spoken of among the hymn writers. Her hymns are only twelve in number, occupying a few pages at the end of her poetical works. But all of them are good of their kind, considered as devotional poems, not intended for congregational use. She published only those which she thought the best, acting, in this instance at least, on the excellent principle, 'I had rather it be asked of twenty pieces why they are not here, than of one why it is.'[3] Four of them, one for Easter Sunday, one on 'Pious Friendship,' and those beginning, 'Praise to God, immortal praise,' and 'Awake my soul! lift up thine eyes,' may be found in Sir Roundell Palmer's selection. The following is upon the text, 'Come unto me all ye that are weary,' &c.:—

> Come, said Jesus' sacred voice,
> Come and make my paths your choice;
> I will guide you to your home;
> Weary pilgrim, hither come!

[1] Hurdis, Jas., *Poems*, 'The Village Curate.'

[2] Mrs. Barbauld was three years older than her brother Dr. Aikin. Their father was a dissenting clergyman, a friend of Doddridge. Mr. Barbauld's grandfather was a French Protestant who, as a boy, had been smuggled to England inside a cask. His father was an English clergyman. He himself had been intended for the same profession, but had imbibed Nonconformist principles in Dr. Aikin's school. Mrs. Barbauld's celebrity as a teacher is well known.—(L. Aikin's *Memoirs*.)

[3] *Works of Anna L. Barbauld, with Memoir*, by Lucy Aikin, i. lx.

Thou, who houseless, sole, forlorn,
Long hast borne the proud world's scorn,
Long hast roam'd the barren waste—
Weary pilgrim, hither haste!

Ye who, tossed on beds of pain,
Seek for ease, but seek in vain,
Ye whose swol'n and sleepless eyes
Watch to see the morning rise;

Ye, by fiercer anguish torn,
In strong remorse for guilt who mourn;
Here repose your heavy care,
A wounded spirit who can bear!

Sinner, come! for here is found
Balm that flows for every wound;
Peace that ever shall endure,
Rest eternal, sacred, sure.[1]

Among her general poems there are several of a sacred character, as the address to the Deity, beginning 'God of my life, and author of my days!'

The earlier publications of *George Crabbe* (1756–1832) belong wholly to the eighteenth century. The 'Candidate,' the 'Library,' the 'Village,' and the 'Newspaper,' appeared between 1780 and 1785. After that date, as if contented with the praise and popularity he had won, he retired into the seclusion of domestic and parochial life, so that when his 'Village Register' was published twenty-two years afterwards, in 1807, he was welcomed almost as a new writer. In the character, also, as well as in the date of his poetry, he is a link between two periods. The influence of Pope, the grand model of eighteenth-century poets, upon his style of thought and versification is constantly visible and frequently acknowledged, especially in his earlier works. In simplicity, on the other hand, in minuteness of observation, in his love of Nature, and in thorough sympathy with the poor, he belonged rather to that newer school of poetry of which there were few traces until the last century was drawing near its close.

Crabbe's title to be ranked among authors of sacred poetry rests chiefly upon the beautiful Pilgrim's Song, 'Pil-

[1] *Works*, i. 334.

grim, burdened with thy sin,' &c.,[1] in 'Sir Eustace Grey,' a poem written in 1804. He gained his literary successes as the Christian moralist, the keen-eyed but kindly censor of humble life. While he was yet a young medical practitioner struggling against adverse circumstances at Aldborough, his native place, he formed his purpose, and steadfastly kept to it.

> Be it my boast to please and to improve,
> To warm the soul to virtue and to love;
> To paint the passions, and to teach mankind
> The greatest pleasures are the most refin'd;
> The cheerful tale with fancy to rehearse,
> And gild the moral with the charm of verse.[2]

Among the fragments of sacred poetry which occur in his early note-books, and which were published by his son among his other works, there is one dated 1778, upon the Resurrection, suggested by early spring flowers, and the following short aspiration, as he wandered in the late evening along the 'samphire banks' of the Suffolk coast:[3]

> The sober stillness of the night
> That fills the silent air,
> And all that breathes along the shore,
> Invite to solemn prayer.
>
> Vouchsafe to me that spirit, Lord,
> Which points the sacred way,
> And let thy creatures here below
> Instruct me how to pray.

Some incidental mention has been made of *William Blake* (1757–1827), in another of these chapters. To the majority of his contemporaries, his poetry was as unintelligible as his painting. He was simply pitied as a madman, or scorned as a visionary mystic. His admirers in a later age have done him ample justice. 'He was a poet,' writes one of his editors, 'who in his best things has hardly fallen short of the large utterances of the Elizabethan dramatists, the pastoral simplicity of Wordsworth, the subtlety and fire of Shelley, and the

[1] G. Crabbe's *Poetical Works*, with his Letters, &c., by his Son, ii. 275.
[2] 'The Wish,' id. ii. 310.
[3] Id. i. 11. [4] Id. ii. 313.

lyrical tenderness of Tennyson.'[1] His simpler poems are many of them delightful. And the reader who will bear patiently with great faults—wild fancies of a disordered imagination, obscurities, enigmas, paradoxes, eccentricities of religious and moral belief, extravagances of expression, metrical irregularities, and sometimes grammatical carelessness—will often find himself rewarded by a strain of poetry which in depth and sweetness may be said to exceed any that the eighteenth century has elsewhere produced. As a writer of sacred poetry he had capacities of no ordinary kind. His words—

> I am in God's presence night and day—
> He never turns his face away—[2]

were to him the expression of a reality as vividly impressed upon his conception as any outward object of sense could be to an ordinary mind. No one can read his poems without feeling convinced of this. He died in a very rapture of joy, composing and uttering almost to the very last 'songs to his Maker so sweetly, to the ears of his wife, that when she stood to hear him, he, looking upon her most affectionately, said "My beloved, they are not mine, no, they are not mine."'[3] None could be more persuaded than he was that death is in very truth the 'golden door' of life, re-opening inlets of spiritual perception[4] among which the outward senses are the least and the most imperfect. In one of his poems he writes :—

> The door of death is made of gold,
> That mortal eyes cannot behold;
> But when the mortal eyes are clos'd,
> And cold and pale the limbs repos'd,
> The soul awakes, and, wondering, sees
> In her mild hand the golden keys.
> The grave is heaven's golden gate,
> And rich and poor around it wait.

One of the most beautiful of his 'Songs of Innocence,' published in 1789, is that entitled, 'On another's sorrow.' Part of it runs thus :—

[1] Preface to W. Blake's *Poetical Sketches*, ed. by R. H., p. xiv.
[2] From a MS. poem, quoted in Al. Gilchrist's *Life of Blake*, p. 310.
[3] Id. 361. [4] Cf. A. C. Swinburne's *Life of Blake*, p. 242.

Can I see another's woe,
And not be in sorrow too?
Can I see another's grief,
And not seek for kind relief?

Can I see a falling tear,
And not feel my sorrow's share?
Can a father see his child
Weep, nor be with sorrow fill'd?

Can a mother sit and hear
An infant groan, an infant fear?
No, no; never can it be—
Never, never can it be.

. . . .

He doth give His joy to all;
He becomes an infant small;
He becomes a man of woe;
He doth feel the sorrow too.

Think not thou canst sigh a sigh,
And thy Maker is not by;
Think not thou canst weep a tear,
And thy Maker is not near.[1]

His own heart was one that overflowed with wide sympathy; but most of all was he full of tenderness towards little children. The following, entitled 'The Lamb,' may be quoted as an example:—

Little lamb, who made thee?
Dost thou know who made thee?
Gave thee life, and bid thee feed
By the stream and o'er the mead;
Gave thee clothing of delight,
Softest clothing, woolly, bright;
Gave thee such a tender voice,
Making all the vales rejoice;
Little lamb, who made thee?
Dost thou know who made thee?

Little lamb, I'll tell thee;
Little lamb, I'll tell thee.

[1] W. Blake's *Songs of Innocence and Experience*, p. 34.

He is called by thy name ;
For He calls himself a Lamb :
He is meek, and He is mild—
He became a little child.
I a child, and thou a lamb,
We are called by His name.
Little lamb, God bless thee.
Little lamb, God bless thee ![1]

Samuel Coleridge, although only born in 1772, was, chronologically, an eighteenth-century poet. 1797 has been very properly called his great poetical year ; and most of his noblest verses, including many that were not published till 1816, were composed before the close of the century. There could scarcely be a stronger illustration of the development of thought during the ninety years preceding than the contrast between the poetry of Coleridge and that which flourished in the reign of Anne.

Coleridge's verse is deeply penetrated with religious feeling, though he rarely wrote upon what are commonly called sacred subjects. It was so even at the time of his greatest speculative perplexities, when (to use his own words) 'I found myself all afloat : doubts rushed in ; broke upon me "from the fountains of the great deep," and "fell from the windows of heaven." The fontal truths of natural and revealed religion alike contributed to the flood ; and it was long ere my ark touched on an Ararat and rested.'[2] His was a mind that could not be satisfied without probing to the foundations of religion and morals ; and metaphysical difficulties, such as those which attended his meditations on personality in God as reconciled with infinity, sorely perplexed him. But, as he often has said, his difficulties were intellectual ; in feeling he never lost his hold on faith and goodness. 'My head was with Spinoza, though my whole heart remained with Paul and John.'[3] He passed through a phase of zealous Unitarianism, but did not find what he wanted in it ; and gradually, as he exchanged Hartley's philosophy for views more nearly approaching those of Kant, and discerned more clearly the properties and limitations of the human

[1] W. Blake's *Songs of Innocence and Experience*, p. 8.
[2] *Life of S. T. Coleridge*, by Jas. Gillman, i. 87. [3] Id.

mind, his intellectual perplexities cleared away, and he found the satisfaction he craved in a fervid but thoughtful acceptance of Christianity as he found it set forth in the liturgy of the English Church. Before the nineteenth century had begun, the great struggle by which for some years past Coleridge's mind had been distracted—the ferment of his thought on religious, philosophical, and political questions—had comparatively subsided, and his powerful intellect had taken its matured form.

Through all this time, poetry had been no common solace to him. 'It has soothed my afflictions (he said); it has multiplied and refined my enjoyments; it has endeared solitude; and it has given me the habit of wishing to discover the good and the beautiful in all that meets and surrounds me.'[1] Hence the great charm of much of his earlier poetry. It is the innermost record of a mind instinct with life and thought, always religious even amid its most disquieting doubts—longing to believe, even when it could not—obedient to the rule of faith, even where reason affected to dispute its right to rule.

> Thrice holy faith! Whatever thorns I meet,
> As on I totter with unpractis'd feet,
> Still let me stretch my arms and cling to Thee,
> Meek nurse of souls through their long infancy.[2]

Like most young men of ability and promise Coleridge had been intensely interested in the great events which had been transacted across the Channel. At the outbreak of the Revolution he had been fired with the most sanguine expectations. Ardent love of freedom, eager sympathy with the poor and the oppressed, expectations of a new order of society which would be truer, nobler, happier than had ever gone before, excited him into a sort of religious enthusiasm, as though the Saviour's kingdom were about to begin on earth, and the thousand years had reached their advent. He trusted that even the fury of the outbreak would be only as the storm that cleared the sky for halcyon days to follow;

[1] *Life of S. T. Coleridge*, by Jas. Gillman, 101.

[2] 'To an Infant,' written about 1794, *Poetical Works*, i. 76.

or rather the opening of the seals, prelusive to the coming forth from God of the new Jerusalem.

> Transfigured with a dreadless awe,
> A solemn hush of soul, meek he beholds
> All things of terrible seeming: yea, unmov'd
> Views e'en th' unmitigable ministers
> That shower down vengeance on these later days.
> For kindly with intenser deity
> From the celestial mercy-seat they come,
> And at the renovating wells of Love
> Have filled their vials with salutary wrath,
> To sickly nature more medicinal
> Than what soft balm the weeping, good man pours
> Into the lone, despoiled traveller's wounds.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Lord of unsleeping Love
> From everlasting Thou! we shall not die,
> These, even these, in mercy didst thou form
> Teachers of good through evil, by brief wrong
> Making truth lovely, and her future might
> Magnetic o'er the fixed, untrembling heart.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> The Lamb of God hath opened the fifth seal:
> And upward rush, on swiftest wing of fire,
> The innumerable multitude of wrongs
> By man on man inflicted! Rest awhile,
> Children of wretchedness! The hour is nigh![1]

His fervid anticipations of a blest future upon a renovated earth were destined to speedy and bitter disappointment. In his pathetic ode upon France, written in 1797, he has recorded the progress of his disenchantment, slow and unwilling, but none the less complete. The outburst of 'fierce and drunken passions'—the 'loud scream of blasphemy'[2]—the shedding of innocent blood—scarcely availed at first to awaken him from his golden dream:

> Ye storms that round the dawning east assembled,
> The sun was rising, though ye hid his light.[3]

[1] *Religious Musings* (1794), 85–94.
[2] *France*, an Ode, 1797, id. 130.
[3] Id.

It was not until France invaded the liberties of Switzerland that he reluctantly relinquished his hopes.

To Coleridge's mind, freedom was indeed a holy thing. In its highest sense it was

> the unfettered use
> Of all the powers that God for use had given:
> But chiefly this, Him first, Him last to view,
> Through meaner powers of secondary things
> Effulgent, or through clouds that veil his blaze.[1]

His hymn on national freedom was a devotional poem in quite a true sense of the word, prefaced by a reverential appeal to the

> Eternal Father! King Omnipotent,
> To the will Absolute, the One, the Good!
> The I Am, the Word, the Life, the Living God.[2]

It seemed to him a work in all respects worthy of angelic ministrations to build up kingdoms and to guide with superhuman agency the destinies of nations.[3] In his patriotism there was the same deep, religious tone. The sanctity of human life, not in the individual only, nor only in its family and social relations, but in its wider sphere of political action —the loftiness of the ideal towards which its efforts should be directed—the inspiring greatness of its capabilities—these were thoughts which gave a very marked character to Coleridge's religious musings, and which were pointedly in contrast with the prevailing bias of the generation which immediately preceded him. Political life had so long been the almost recognised arena of low and worldly motives, of faction, intrigue, and corruption, that if the speculations of men of Coleridge's moral and intellectual power were apt to be somewhat mystical and overwrought, sometimes erroneous and misleading, they were of very real value to the age. They were not only a most refreshing contrast to much that had gone before, but they contributed largely to the formation of a new mental epoch. There were many men whose names occur in the public history of the eighteenth century fully as fervid and earnest as he was. But for a long time previously there had not been many—as there were many afterwards—in whose minds the same conjunction of ideas

[1] *The Destiny of Nations*, a Vision, id. 98. [2] Id. [3] Id. 104.

would be associated as to Coleridge, when he left for a wider sphere of action the myrtle-covered walls of his pleasant Somersetshire cottage :

> I therefore go and join head, heart, and hand,
> Active and firm, to fight the bloodless fight
> Of Science, Freedom, and the Truth in Christ.[1]

And no less was Coleridge sensitively alive, both as a poet and as a religious man, to a sacred presence, a holy teaching, in outward nature. The 'Hymn before sunrise in the vale of Chamouni,' published in 1816, but written before the close of the last century,[2] does not lose by comparison with the noble hymn which Milton has put into the lips of our first parents. It certainly touches finer chords of feeling than any which James Thomson, even in his finest passages, appealed to. As the contemplation of a spiritual mind deeply touched by the sublimer aspects of mountain scenery, how beautiful is this—

> Thou too, hoar mount, with thy sky-pointing peaks,
> Oft from whose feet the avalanche, unheard,
> Starts downward, glittering through the pure serene
> Into the depth of clouds that veil thy breast—
> Thou too again, stupendous mountain ! thou
> That as I raise my head, awhile bowed low
> In adoration, upward from thy base
> Slow travelling with dim eyes suffused with tears,
> Solemnly seemest, like a vapoury cloud,
> To rise before me. Rise, O ever rise,
> Rise like a cloud of incense from the earth !
> Thou kingly spirit throned among the hills,
> Thou dread ambassador from earth to heaven,
> Great hierarch ! tell thou the silent sky,
> And tell the stars, and tell yon rising sun,
> Earth with her thousand voices praises God.[3]

Not that sublimity in nature was needed to kindle such sympathies ; for—

> Nature ne'er deserts the wise and pure,
> No plot so narrow, be but nature there,

[1] 'Reflection on having left a place of Retirement,' 1798, id. i. 195.

[2] Gillman's *Life of Coleridge*, i. 308. He quotes an interesting criticism by Coleridge himself upon this poem, in answer to his friend Wordsworth who had condemned it as 'mock sublime.' The sentiment of it is undoubtedly high-strung, but none the less genuine.

[3] *Works*, i. 186.

No waste so vacant, but may well employ
Each faculty of sense, and keep the heart
Awake to love and beauty.[1]

Coleridge was no less persuaded than Wordsworth that poetry fulfilled a worthy and truly religious function in 'awakening the mind's attention from the lethargy of custom and directing it to the loveliness and wonders of the world before us,—an inexhaustible treasure; but for which, in consequence of the feeling of familiarity and selfish solicitude, we have eyes that see not, ears that hear not, and hearts that neither feel nor understand.'[2] He saw—

That outward forms, the loftiest, still receive
Their finest influence from the life within;[3]

and he and his brother poet, in a spirit into which devotional sentiment largely entered, set themselves to awaken among their countrymen the livelier susceptibilities which they had learnt thus highly to appreciate. In earlier life they sometimes worked together, and worked harmoniously with the the same general purpose before each. Coleridge had not the exquisite poetical simplicity of Wordsworth, but he was quite equally alive to the spiritual side of nature. The outward universe was to his mind full of divine and mystic life, active, although unseen; abounding in what might be called the emblems and reflections of a higher existence.

Coleridge's very beautiful lines upon his 'Baptismal Birthday,' beginning—

God's child in Christ adopted—Christ my all,

must not be quoted here, as they belong to a much later period of his life. But that this notice of his poetry in its connection with devotional thought may conclude with a passage more definitely religious in its tone than those last referred to, the following may be cited:—

There is one mind, one omnipresent mind,
Omnific, His most holy name is Love.

[1] 'The Lime Tree Bower,' *Works*, i. 204.

[2] Coleridge, upon the Lyrical Ballad, published by him and Wordsworth in 1798. Gillman's *Life of Coleridge*, i. 105.

[3] *Poetical Works*, ii. 151.

Truth of subliming import! with the which
Who feeds and saturates his constant soul,
He from his small, particular orbit flies
With blest outstarting! From himself he flies;
Stands in the sun, and with no partial gaze
Views all creation, and He loves it all,
And blesses it, and calls it very good!
This is indeed to dwell with the Most High![1]

The development of *Robert Southey's* mind was in many respects closely analogous to that through which Coleridge passed. An intimate friendship had grown up between the two men while the former was at Balliol College, and the latter an undergraduate of a year and a half's longer standing at Jesus College, Cambridge.[2] Their tastes and feelings were in many respects congenial. Both were fired with the same enthusiastic expectations of a coming reign of universal brotherhood. The great experiment of republicanism in America, the moral crusade in England against slavery, above all, the tremendous revolutionary outbreak in France, flattered their anticipations, and kindled them to a glowing heat. Like Kant and Klopstock, like Lavater and Alfieri,[3] and like many men of ability in England, their joy and hope were great, their disappointment proportionately bitter.[4] It is well known how the two friends proposed to carry their theory into practice by heading a colony on the banks of the Susquehannah, where intellect and industry, pure philosophy and good agriculture, sound religion, cultivated poetry, and

[1] *Religious Musings*, 1794, id. i. 86.

[2] *Life and Correspondence of Robert Southey*, ed. by his son, C. C. Southey, i. 210.

[3] Gillman's *Life of S. T. Coleridge*, i. 47.

[4] Cf. Shelley's fine lines :—

'The nations thronged around and cried aloud
As with one voice, truth, liberty, and love!
Suddenly fierce confusion fell from heaven
Among them, there was strife, deceit and fear.'

Prometheus Unbound.

Thus, also, Sir S. Romilly wrote in May 1792: 'The conduct of the Assembly has not been able to shake my conviction that it [the Revolution] is the most glorious event, and the happiest for mankind, that has ever taken place since human affairs were recorded.' In the September of that same year, he could scarcely find words strong enough to express his horror of the movement.—*Corresp.* ii. 3. Qu. in W. Massey's *Hist. of the Reign of George III.*, iii. 502.

honest trade, should flourish together under a government of perfect equality in bonds of fraternity and peace. The pleasing vision collapsed through an unfortunate want of funds; and England retained within her shores two young men whose voluntary banishment into the wilds of America would have left a blank in our literary history.

Southey, like Coleridge, had been much disturbed in his religious convictions during the ferment of mind and feeling through which he had passed. He gave up all ideas of ordination, and his opinions were for a time very unsettled. 'They soon took the form of Unitarianism, from which point they seem gradually to have ascended without any abrupt transitions as the troubles of life increased his devotional feeling, and the study of religious authors informed his better judgment, until they finally settled down into a strong attachment to the doctrines of the Church of England.'[1] Here again, except that the period of change was marked in Coleridge's case by much greater intensity of religious feeling, the course of development was strangely similar.

Some very fine devotional passages might be selected from Southey's later poetry. Even 'Thalaba,' which was begun in 1800, although an Arabian story, is indebted to a nobler source than the Koran for its pure religious feeling and moral sublimity.[2] But the poems he wrote in his earlier days, before the close of the eighteenth century, are also marked by a serious loftiness of aim. 'I may not,' he wrote in June 1797, 'live to do good to mankind personally, but I shall at least leave something behind me to strengthen those feelings and excite those reflections from whence Virtue must spring. In writing poetry with this end, I hope I am not uselessly employing my leisure hours.'[3] In one of his

[1] *Life of Southey*, i. 203.

[2] 'The design required that I should bring into view the best features of that system of belief and worship which had been developed under the covenant with Ishmael, placing in the most favourable light the morality of the Koran, and what the least corrupted of the Mahometans retain of the patriarchal faith. It would have been altogether incongruous to have touched upon the abominations engrafted upon it.'—Southey's preface to eighth vol. of ed. of 1838. 'Thalaba is a poetic story of faith—its spiritual birth, its might, its trials, and its victory—such a story as none but a Christian poet could have told.'—H. Read's introd. to *Engl. Literature*, 169.

[3] *Life of Southey*, i. 319.

first poems, dated 1793, 'The Triumph of Woman,' a subject suggested by the third and fourth chapters of Esdras, he writes,—

> And loving beauty, learn
> To shun abhorrent all the mental eye
> Beholds deformed and foul; for so shall love
> Climb to the source of goodness. God of Truth!
> All Just! All Mighty! I should ill deserve
> Thy noblest gift, the gift divine of song,
> If, so content with ear-deep melodies,
> To please all profitless, I did not pour
> Severer strains—of Truth—eternal Truth,
> Unchanging Justice, universal Love.[1]

'Joan of Arc,' published in 1795, is interesting as showing how, amid the unsettled opinions of his early manhood, he ever kept steadfastly in view the majesty of goodness, the sense of God's presence, the holiness of the Divine attributes, and the trust in immortality.

The second book of 'The Vision of the Maid,' published 1798, is quite Dante-like in the weird energy and moral force with which he imagines the future doom of the wanton, the epicure, the hypocrite, the cruel, and so forth.

There is a very beautiful poem written by Southey during a tour in Portugal in 1796, after a visit to the Convent of Arrabida. It well expresses the natural transition by which a healthy mind passes from an almost envious contemplation of peaceful seclusion, in the midst of natural beauty, from the sins and troubles of the outward world, to a sense of the active energies required of life in its youth and prime. Then rest duly earned may be indeed welcome—

> Happy then
> To muse on many a sorrow overpast,
> And think the business of the day is done,
> And as the evening of our lives shall close—
> The peaceful evening—with a Christian's hope
> Expect the dawn of everlasting day.[2]

As a last quotation, the following may be given. It was written in 1799 to the memory of his dear friend Edmund Seward:—

[1] Southey's *Poet. Works*, 82. [2] *Works*, 137.

1

Not to the grave, not to the grave, my Soul,
Descend to contemplate
The form that once was dear!
The Spirit is not there,
Which kindled that dead eye,
Which throbb'd in that cold heart,
Which in that motionless hand
Hath met thy friendly grasp.
The Spirit is not there!
It is but lifeless, perishable flesh
That moulders in the grave;
Earth, air, and water's ministering particles
Now to the elements
Resolved, their uses done.
Not to the grave, not to the grave, my soul,
Follow thy friend belov'd,
The Spirit is not there!

2

Often together have we talk'd of death;
How sweet it were to see
All doubtful things made clear;
How sweet it were with powers
Such as the Cherubim,
To view the depth of heaven!
O Edmund! thou hast first
Begun the travel of Eternity:
I look upon the stars,
And think that thou art there,
Unfetter'd as the thought that follows thee.

3

And we have often said how sweet it were,
With unseen ministry of angel power,
To watch the friends we lov'd.
Edmund! we did not err!
Sure I have felt thy presence! Thou hast given
A birth to holy thought,
Hast kept me from the world unstain'd and pure
Edmund! we did not err!
Our best affections here,

They are not like the toys of infancy;
The soul outgrows them not;
We do not cast them off;
Oh, if it could be so,
It were indeed a dreadful thing to die!

4

Not to the grave, not to the grave, my soul,
Follow thy friend beloved!
But in the lonely hour,
But in the evening walk,
Think that he companies thy solitude;
Think that he holds with thee
Mysterious intercourse;
And though remembrance wake a tear,
There will be joy in grief.[1]

Living as *William Wordsworth* (1770–1850) did, into the middle of this century, and writing poetry almost to the last, it needs a certain effort to think of him as a poet of the last century also. Yet his mind attained its full development in and through the stirring events of the revolutionary decade. Although the mellowing influence of maturer years is very visible, both in his poetry and in his entire mode of thinking, the Wordsworth of 1800 is, in every line of his writings, unmistakably identical with the Wordsworth of a much later date; and some of his most characteristic poems had been already written. Much that has been said within the last few pages in reference to Coleridge and Southey may be repeated of him. The birth of a great republic, full of promise, beyond the Atlantic, had first seized his imagination:

Before me shone a glorious world—
Fresh as a banner bright, unfurled
To music suddenly:
I looked upon those hills and plains,
And seemed as if let loose from chains
To live at liberty.[2]

Then came the outbreak of the Revolution, when his hopes

[1] *Works*, 131.
[2] W. Wordsworth's *Poetical Works*, 'Ruth' (1799) ii. 121.

were all aglow, and his whole spirit fired with enthusiastic expectation:

> Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,
> But to be young was very heaven.[1]

He watched with eager hope the growth of a new era, emerging triumphantly, as he believed, out of the midst of opposition; yet scarcely dared to trust in all he hoped for:

> All cannot be: the promise is too fair
> For creatures doomed to breathe terrestrial air:
> Yet not for this will sober reason frown
> Upon that promise nor the hope disown;
> She knows that only from high aims ensue
> Rich guerdons, and to them alone are due.[2]

To Heaven, therefore, with religious earnestness, he commended the issues of what he confided in as a great and holy cause. He could not be satisfied to watch from a distance the progress of the movement. He wandered alone through France; he stayed in Paris; he returned to it again; he listened to Jacobin harangues; he

> Became a patriot, and his heart was all
> Given to the people, and his love was theirs.[3]

The atrocities that followed filled him with horror and dismay. Robespierre's fall revived for a brief interval his hopes. The news of it reached him as he was crossing the sands at Ulverstone:

> 'Come now, ye golden times,'
> Said I, forth pouring on those open sands
> A hymn of triumph: 'as the Morning comes
> From out the bosom of the Night, come ye.'[4]

'But this ecstasy was of short duration: the cloud which hung over France became as dense and as dark as ever; and his sadness was not relieved, but pressed with a wearier

[1] W. Wordsworth's *Poet. Works*; and 'The French Revolution, as it appeared to Enthusiasts at its commencement,' reprinted from the *Friend*, ii. 155.

[2] Id., 'Descriptive Sketches,' 1791–2, i. 36.

[3] 'Prelude,' 345. Christopher Wordsworth's *Memoirs of W. Wordsworth*, i. 73.

[4] 'Prelude,' 291. *Memoirs*, &c. 84.

weight upon his soul.'[1] He was distressed with a very turmoil of perplexity and doubt. It was at this time he owed so much to his sister's influence.

> Then it was—
> Thanks to the bounteous Giver of all Good—
> That the beloved sister, in whose sight
> Those days were passed. . . . .
> Maintained for me a saving intercourse
> With my true self.[2]

His democratical opinions gradually passed away, but left behind tempered feelings of deep and tender sympathy with the poor, and a quick appreciation of the grace and simple dignity of which humble life is susceptible. From 'the fretful stir' of human passion, from 'the burden of the mystery,' from

> the heavy and the weary weight
> Of all this unintelligible world,[3]

Wordsworth fled for refuge to a peaceful spiritual contemplation of nature. He has written few finer or more characteristic verses than some which he composed in 1798, upon revisiting the sweet scenery of the Wye :—

> I have learned
> To look on nature, not as in the hour
> Of thoughtless youth; but hearing oftentimes
> The still sad music of humanity,
> Nor harsh, nor grating, though of ample power
> To chasten and subdue. And I have felt
> A presence that disturbs me with the joy
> Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
> Of something far more deeply interfused,
> Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
> And the round ocean and the living air,
> And the blue sky, and in the mind of man :
> A motion and a spirit, that impels
> All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
> And rolls through all things. Therefore am I still
> A lover of the meadows, and the woods
> And mountains; and of all that we behold

[1] *Memoirs*, &c. 84. [2] 'Prelude,' 309, *Memoirs*, &c. i. 90.
[3] *Poet. Works*, 'Tintern Abbey' (1798), i. 151.

From this green earth ; of all the mighty world
Of eye and ear—both what they half create
And what perceive ; well pleased to recognise
In nature, and the language of the sense,
The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul
Of all my moral being.[1]

No doubt there are in this poem traces of something like a pantheistic philosophy in which enthusiastic love of nature degenerates into nature-worship, and the thought of God is merged in the contemplation of the works of God. At the least, there is an evident tendency to exaggerate the power of nature as a means of purifying humanity, and supporting it amid infirmity and sorrows.[2] In his later years, while his delight in natural beauty remained strong as ever, he was more invariably quick to discern that the soul of man, fallen as it is from innocence, cannot find the wisdom and the happiness it craves in any mere outward things. It needs aids and remedies more truly divine than these. The following passage, lovely as it is, needs the correction supplied in these later verses that follow :—

Knowing that Nature never did betray
The heart that loved her ; 'tis her privilege
Through all the years of this our life, to lead
From joy to joy ; for she can so inform
The mind that is within us, so impress
With quietness and beauty, and so feed
With lofty thoughts, that neither evil tongues,
Rash judgments, nor the sneers of selfish men,
Nor greetings where no kindness is, nor all
The dreary intercourse of daily life
Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb
Our cheerful faith, that all which we behold
Is full of blessings.[3]

Compare it with the following part of his 4th 'Evening Voluntary,' written thirty-six years afterwards—

But who *is* innocent? By grace divine,
Not otherwise, O Nature ! we are thine,

[1] *Poet. Works*, 'Tintern Abbey' (1798), i. 151.
[2] Cf. *Memoirs*, i. 48.
[3] *Poet. Works*, 'Tintern Abbey' (1798), i. 154.

Through good and evil thine, in just degree
Of rational and manly sympathy.
To all that Earth from pensive hearts is stealing,
And Heaven is now to gladdened eyes revealing,
Add every charm the Universe can show
Through every change its aspects undergo—
Care may be respited, but not repealed;
No perfect cure grows on that bounded field.
Vain is the pleasure, a false calm the peace,
If He, through whom alone our conflicts cease,
Our virtuous hopes without relapse advance,
Come not to speed the soul's deliverance?[1]

But from the first there was little fear that Wordsworth's influence could be otherwise than conducive to true religious feeling. The pure and genuine enthusiasm of a mind sensitively awake to a spiritual presence in all that surrounded him, and to 'the types and symbols of eternity,'[2] manifested to man in outward forms of earth, and sea, and sky, is almost sure to be beneficial to those who feel its influence. Even if it be in excess, it is not likely to lead men astray. Those finer chords of feeling to which it appeals are very rarely in danger, among the majority of even cultivated men, of being excited into undue or too frequent action. The reader, however much he may admire, is far more likely to lag behind the poet's thought, than to be led into advance of it. Moreover, such enthusiasm is so closely allied to the religious sentiment, that it may be generally trusted in the end to favour and promote it. Whatever stirs the mind to reflect upon truth and beauty, upon the ideal and suprasensual, upon the traces of a Divine image both in nature and humanity, is adapted to enlarge the soul and prepare it for a glad reception of the noblest doctrines of Christianity. Wordsworth, throughout his life, in his earlier as well as in his later works, was a true religious teacher, and a teacher whose direct or indirect influence has been very widely felt. The 'Christian Year,' for instance, even if it had been written, would certainly never have gained the popularity it has had, were it not for the growth of that finer, semi-religious love of nature which

[1] *Poet. Works*, 'Fourth Evening Voluntary,' iv. 127.
[2] Id. 'The Simplon Pass' (1799), ii. 100.

Wordsworth and his brother writers did so much to disseminate and increase.

Charles Lamb (1775–1834) was also one in that society of poets, of whom Wordsworth, Coleridge, Southey, and Rogers were the other principal members. His earlier poems were published in 1797, conjointly with other verses by Coleridge and Charles Lloyd. Southey hailed the volume with delight, and thought that none other that had lately appeared could be compared with it.[1] Certainly, there is often a grave and gentle reflectiveness about Lamb's poetry which is very fascinating. He had no love for the country. 'Beyond all other men whom I have ever met,' writes his biographer, 'he was essentially metropolitan.'[2] When Wordsworth dwelt upon the beauties of the Lake Country, and pressed him to come and see him there, he answered that he was 'not at all romance-bit about Nature. . . . When all is said, it is but a house to live in.'[3] Nevertheless, he was a lover of Wordsworth's poetry; and Coleridge, his old schoolfellow at Christ's Hospital, he loved and admired throughout life with a fervency of attachment far surpassing that of any common friendship.

Lamb had many sympathies in common with his friends, and, like theirs, his poetry was always pure and high-toned. He not unfrequently touches in his verse upon religious subjects, as in his 'Vision of Repentance,' or in his lines upon the 'Sabbath Bells,' which—

> . . . . wherever heard,
> Strike pleasant on the sense, most like the voice
> Of one, who from the far-off hills proclaims
> Tidings of good to Zion.[4]

In the following, from his 'Lines on Leonardo da Vinci's picture of the Virgin of the Rocks,' there is a something which may slightly remind the reader of a passage in Wordsworth's noble 'Ode to Immortality:'—

> But at her side
> An angel doth abide,
> With such a perfect joy
> As no dim doubts alloy,

[1] *Life of R. Southey*, by his Son, i. 329.
[2] Barry Cornwall's *Memoir of Charles Lamb*, 222.
[3] Id. 84.
[4] *Poetical Works of Charles Lamb*, p. 70.

An intuition,
A glory, an amenity,
Passing the dark condition
Of blind humanity,
As if he surely knew
All the blest wonders would ensue,
Or he had lately left the upper sphere,
And had read all the sovran schemes and divine riddles there.[1]

He was certainly not one of those who have thought that poetry is exercised to a disadvantage upon divine subjects. Witness the following:—

The truant Fancy was a wanderer ever—
A lone, enthusiast maid. She loves to walk
In the bright visions of empyreal light,
By the green pastures and the fragrant meads,
Where the perpetual flowers of Eden blow;
By crystal streams, and by the living waters,
Along whose margin grows the wondrous tree
Whose leaves shall heal the nations; underneath
Whose holy shade a refuge shall be found
From pain and want, and all the ills that wait
On mortal life, from sin and death for ever.[2]

James Montgomery (1771–1852) can scarcely be said to have written, in the eighteenth century, any sacred poetry worthy of more than a passing mention. Poetical talent and warm religious feeling had showed themselves early in him while he was yet a boy in the Moravian school at Fulneck.[3] But throughout his early manhood he became absorbed in politics. Party feeling was very strong in Sheffield during the revolutionary era; and Montgomery, reluctantly at first, but afterwards with impetuous eagerness, threw himself into the strife as a 'Friend of Reform,' and a leader among his fellow-townsmen in what he believed to be the cause of freedom, justice, and humanity. He was editor of a popular newspaper; and was twice committed to York Prison, on

[1] *Poetical Works of Charles Lamb*, p. 48.
[2] Id. 71.
[3] *Memoirs of James Montgomery*, by John Holland and James Everett, chap. iv. See also Montgomery's 'Departed Days; on visiting Fulneck in 1796'—*Poetical Works*, ii. 165.

charges, which in less excited times would have been ludicrously insufficient, of printing seditious matter.[1] The 'Songs of Zion,' and other sacred lyrics by which his fame was gained as a writer of devotional poetry, were composed at a later period, in more tranquil times, and when the religious impressions of his youth had returned upon him with renewed force. One, however, of his boyish compositions, a version of the 113th Psalm, written in 1787, has found a place in some Church collections.[2] During the closing decade of the last century he only wrote a few political hymns.[3]

Thomas Campbell's 'Pleasures of Hope' was published in the last year of the eighteenth century, when he was scarcely twenty-two years old. He too, although a mere boy at the time, had been infected with the same revolutionary enthusiasm which filled the minds of most young men of talent. The executions and massacres that took place in Paris had indeed sickened and disgusted him; but he also deplored them as signal calamities to the cause of peace and liberty in England.[4] In all the principal poetry of the last years of the century, religious and political hopes were more or less blended. It was so with Campbell. The 'Pleasures of Hope,' though not in any direct way either a political or a religious poem, is to some extent both one and the other. Hopes of a nobler liberty and hopes of immortality alike enter into it.

There were other Scotchmen in the eighteenth century who contributed to the store of sacred poetry, of whom it would be beyond the scope of this chapter to make more than very brief mention. The greatest poetical genius produced by Scotland during that period was of course *Burns* (1759-1796). Notwithstanding the sensuous element which too much

[1] *Memoirs*, &c., vol. i., chaps. xi.–xv. Also his preface to *Poet. Works*, i., viii.

[2] *Memoirs*, &c., i. 73.

[3] His anticipations in 1794 seem to have been almost as sanguine as those of Coleridge were, though not expressed with the same dreamy, but poetic grandeur:

> 'Bid Peace her smiling reign resume,
> Where deserts howl, let Eden bloom:
> Already is reform begun,
> The work is Thine—Thy will be done!'—*Memoirs*, i. 188.

[4] W. Beattie's *Life and Letters of T. Campbell*, i. 86.

predominates in his poems, many of his verses show that he could both reverence a deeper religious life in others, and that he was not without knowledge of it in his own experience. The beautiful picture of household piety in 'The Cotter's Saturday Night' is a familiar example. His 'Prayer for a Family' may be added, concluding with the verse—

> When soon or late they reach that coast,
> O'er life's rough ocean driven,
> May they rejoice, no wanderer lost,
> A family in heaven!

Also his prayer for God's forgiveness, beginning, 'O Thou unknown, almighty Cause Of all my hope and fear.' We are told that in his later days 'he had the Bible with him, and read it almost continually. . . . His sceptical doubts no longer troubled him, and he had at last the faith of a confiding Christian.' [1]

There are a few graceful stanzas upon life and eternity, and our hope beyond the grave, in *James Beattie's* 'Minstrel' (1771), and in his 'Hermit' (1767).[2]

James Grahame (1765–1811), a barrister who afterwards took orders, is best known—though not so well known as he deserves to be—by his poem entitled 'The Sabbath.' A thoroughly good man, of refined poetical temperament, and (as is shown by his 'Birds of Scotland') an observant naturalist, his poems breathe a characteristic spirit of tranquil piety, and a hearty relish for the sights and sounds of quiet country life. They abound in delightful passages. The very opening lines of his principal poem may be instanced:

> How still the morning of the hallowed day!
> Mute is the voice of rural labour, hushed
> The ploughboy's whistle and the milkmaid's song.
> The scythe lies glittering in the dewy wreath
> Of tedded grass, mingled with fading flowers
> That yester-morn bloomed waving in the breeze:
> Sounds the most faint attract the ear—the hum
> Of early bee, the trickling of the dew,

[1] Saunders' *Evenings with the Sacred Poets*, 361.

[2] Beattie's *Poems*,—'The Minstrel,' p. 27, and last stanzas of 'The Hermit,' p 93.

The distant bleating, midway up the hill.
Calmness sits throned on yon unmoving cloud.
To him who wanders o'er the upland leas,
The blackbird's note comes mellower from the dale;
And sweeter from the sky the gladsome lark
Warbles his heaven-tuned song; the lulling brook
Murmurs more gently down the deep-worn glen;
While from yon lowly roof, whose curling smoke
O'ermounts the mist, is heard, at intervals,
The voice of psalms, the simple song of praise.[1]

Among other passages which it would be a pleasure to quote may be mentioned that which describes the shepherd boy reading some Sunday of David or of Joseph, as he lies stretched upon the sward in some far-off glen,[2] or the solitary on a lonely island,[3] or the hymns sounding over the sea from the missionary ship,[4] or (from the 'Biblical Pictures') Jesus calming the tempest,[5] or the Resurrection of the Saviour.[6] Saunders tells a pretty story of his bringing home his work on 'the Sabbath,' just after it had been anonymously published, to his wife, who did not know that he was the author of it, and of her exclaiming as she read it, 'Ah, James, if you could but write a poem like this!'

Among Scotch hymn writers of the eighteenth century, *Ralph Erskine* (1685–1752) was one of the earliest. Seven out of the twenty verses of one of his 'Gospel sonnets' are given both in Sir Roundell Palmer's 'Book of Praise'[7] and in C. Rogers' 'Lyra Britannica.'[8] Many of his hymns are mere variations from Watts. He was also the author of some poetical paraphrases of different parts of Scripture.

Thomas Blacklock's hymns and sacred poems, published 1746, may be found in the eighteenth volume of Chalmers' 'English Poets.' His imitation of the 149th Psalm is perhaps the best;[9] but they are chiefly remarkable as the compositions of a man who had been blind from very early childhood.

[1] *Poems* by James Grahame, 1807, i. 3, 'The Sabbath.'
[2] Id. 9, 'The Sabbath.'
[3] Id. 27.
[4] Id. 29–31.
[5] Id. 77.
[6] Id. 82.
[7] *B. of Praise*, ccclxxx.
[8] *Lyra Brit.* 223.
[9] Chalmers' *E. Poets*, xviii. 186.

Southey speaks of *Michael Bruce* (1746–1767) as 'a youth of real genius.'[1] His 'Elegy on the Spring,' written in prospect of an early death, is very pretty, and ends with the pathetic verse—

> There let me sleep, forgotten in the clay,
> When death shall shut these weary, aching eyes—
> Rest in the hope of an eternal day,
> Till the long night is gone, and the last morn arise.[2]

It appears to have been clearly established, both by William Machelvie and Alexander Grosart, that some fine and well-known hymns published in 1773 among the Scotch paraphrases, under the name of John Logan, are really the compositions of Bruce. Logan was in possession of his deceased friend's manuscripts, and published the hymns as his own. Among the most familiar of them are, 'Where high the heavenly temple stands,' 'O God of Bethel, by whose hand,' and 'Behold the mountain of the Lord.'[3]

John Logan (1748–1788) has paid the penalty of his dishonesty by its being no longer known what are justly to be attributed to him as his own production. His repute on questions of psalmody was at one time very great in Scotland.[4]

William Cameron, *John Morrison*, and *Hugh Blair* were all associated with Logan in editing the Scottish paraphrases of 1773. Cameron's hymn, 'How bright those glorious spirits shine,' though mainly his own, is founded upon one of Watts's.[5] Morrison's 'The race that long in darkness pined'[6] is better known as slightly altered by the compilers of 'Hymns Ancient and Modern.' Blair's hymns were none of them altogether original.

It might perhaps seem from the preceding sketch that the eighteenth century was, after all, rich rather than not in sacred poetry. Certainly it was not so barren in this respect

[1] Southey's *Later E. Poets*, ii. 368. [2] Anderson's *British Poets*, xi. 294.
[3] Logan's Poems, Anderson's *Br. Poets*, xi. 1028. 'Life of Logan' in id., and 'Life of M. Bruce,' id. xi., 273. Rogers' *Lyra Brit.* 97. Palmer's *B. of Praise*, 494. [4] Anderson's *Brit. Poets*, xi. 1028.
[5] *Lyra Brit.*, 122. *B. of Praise*, cxiv.
[6] *Lyra Brit.* 430. *B. of Praise*, xxxix., cccxliv.

as some have been apt to think. Throughout its course there was no period in which verse of a more or less religious cast failed either to be produced or to find a very considerable number of readers. Yet it is equally certain that, until it began to draw near its close, the predominating influences of the age were essentially prosaic, and very unfavourable to any poetry which required for its due appreciation anything more than sound reason and ordinary practical sense. The state of feeling which existed among the cultivated classes in England encouraged poetry of a satirical, moral, or didactic character; it applauded art, polish, and correctness; it was willing to listen, not too intently, to the voice of its counsellors when they discoursed, either in verse or prose, upon the wisdom of virtue and the folly of vice, upon the reasonableness of religious life and the happiness which attends it, and upon the evil consequences which a contrary course must bring. But there was little intensity either of thought or feeling, little spiritual activity, little to stir the soul and excite the imagination. Man cannot live with the mysteries of life around him, and that of death in front, without such reflections on time and eternity and the meaning and object of existence, as cannot be altogether prosaic or commonplace. A Christian faith cannot, in all its leading features, be otherwise than sublime. Where Christianity, however depressed, is still a great power, there can be no age so wanting in depth of spiritual sentiment as to be altogether without materials for a religious poetry of a very high order. There were no influences in the eighteenth century so uncongenial to success that a truly great religious poet, if such a one had arisen, could not have triumphed over them. But, apart from the spiritual and moral grandeur inherent to it and inalienable from it, Christianity had certainly, through various causes, come to be generally regarded from a lower and, so to say, a more worldly level than has been at all usual. It will be readily understood that when theology was in this condition, theological poetry was very apt to be either vague and impersonal, or frigid and deficient in warmth, or to have an air of being somewhat unreal and conventional. In the latter case an attempt might probably be made to conceal the deficiency by a turgid, declamatory style. All these faults did, in fact,

abound. Perhaps in this chapter the attention of the reader has been too much directed to passages of merit, and too little to others which might have exemplified characteristic blemishes. But the former is by far the most grateful task; and to have done both might have exceeded our necessary limits. All, however, who have any knowledge of the poetical literature of the period under review will be well aware that the deficiencies here noted were very common. The solemn litany of sacred song was at all times far indeed from being silent, and its notes were often worthy of the greatness of its theme; but throughout a great part of the century it certainly fell short in copiousness, richness, and fervour, both of a preceding and of a subsequent age.

It will have been noticed that some of the best sacred poetry which the century produced had its origin in quarters which lay apart from the main current of popular thought. Ken, deprived of his bishopric, and singing to his lute in the quiet seclusion of Longleat, belonged rather to the Churchmen of George Herbert's day. Norris was the last survivor of the noble school of Oxford and Cambridge Platonists. The sympathies of Hickes, and Hamilton, and Walter Harte were all with the dispossessed adherents of the Stuart rule. Elizabeth Rowe, Byrom, and Blake, however much they might differ from one another, were all in a greater or less degree mystics, little understood by their own contemporaries. Among the hymn writers whose compositions form by far the most distinctive and prominent feature in the sacred poetry of the century, Watts, Doddridge, and others, were Dissenters. And though Methodism rose up in the very bosom of the English Church, it was too generally treated as an alien and an enemy; and the rich accompaniment of sacred song by which, through the talents of Charles Wesley, its rise and progress was attended, was for a long time neglected and discarded by the rulers of the National Church. Toplady, Newton, Cowper, and the other Evangelical hymn writers might have shared the same fate if Wesleyanism had not prepared the way for them, and created just that stir in the waters of which the spiritual life of the country stood so greatly in need. As it was, it cannot be said that Evangelicalism was in any way in discord with the

prevalent development of popular religious thought towards the latter part of the century. And throughout the period, if a good deal of its graver poetry was not that which the age could best appreciate, there was also a very considerable residuum which fairly and genuinely represented the predominant style of thinking among educated people upon religious questions in which they were seriously interested.

The last decade of the century stands in many respects on a very different footing from the rest. In none is this distinctiveness more marked than in the general character of its poetry. When so much that was old seemed rapidly passing away, and the new was so full of promise to some, so suggestive of fear and disquietude to others—when faith and hope, however much alloyed by visions of earth, were at all events vivid with life, and when religious doubts, on the other hand, were no longer mere speculative difficulties, benumbing action rather than actively opposing it, but giants in the path with whom mortal combat was inevitable—when the foundations of society were in a state of upheaval and commotion, and all questions, divine and human, were being boldly canvassed—when great virtues and great wickedness came into strong collision—when brilliant promises were rudely checked, and when it seemed to others that glorious light might rise up suddenly out of utter darkness—at such a time it was not possible that great ideas should lose their strength through mere inactivity and torpor. To the partisans of the new, conceptions of Christian freedom, Christian brotherhood, and the like, had become pregnant with meanings they had never dreamt of before. The partisans of the old learnt to treasure with a greater love blessings which, through familiar use, they had thought little of before—to appreciate the advantages they possessed, to overlook their deficiencies—to cling to all noble traditions of the past with a tenacity proportioned to their newly-awakened fears. It was a time for revived enthusiasm and increased intensity of thought. The period of acute suspense passed quickly away, and caused very little outward change in England. Ancient feeling and established ideas, both in religion and in politics, were confirmed rather than shaken by the dangers which had so closely threatened them. But in religion, as in politics, a real change

had taken place—more sensible in its after results than in its immediate issues. The eighteenth century had practically expired before its years had arrived at their natural term. Its latest portion belongs more to the present than to the past: in nothing more so than in its poetry. Poetry, by virtue of that imaginative faculty which is closely akin to prediction, may often lay claim to advance in the van of human movement.

C. J. A.

CHAPTER IV.

POPULAR CHURCH CRIES.

THE eighteenth century has been termed 'Sæculum rationalisticum;'[1] and if that phrase might be translated, not 'the age of reason,' but 'the age of reasonableness,' it would express the characteristic on which all parties, orthodox and unorthodox alike, most prided themselves. The subject, however, of the present chapter would seem to form an exception to the general rule. 'Reasonable' is about the last epithet one would apply to those popular Church cries which hold a painfully prominent place in the ecclesiastical history of the period. The sad scenes to which these cries too often gave rise suggest at the first glance no other reflection than that of the old poet—

Tantum religio potuit suadere malorum!

A grand old institution dragged through the mire,—a venerable name turned into a mere watchword of party strife, or, worse still, made a pretext not only for violent and unreasoning abuse, but for shameful and cruel outrages upon life, property, and freedom,—these are sights which may well make a Churchman blush.

Yet even this most unlovely picture is not altogether without a redeeming feature. The unscrupulous politicians who utilised the name of the Church for their party purposes, and the senseless mobs who were hounded on to perpetrate in the name of the Church acts which every line of the Church's teaching emphatically condemns, only represent one side of the case. The question still remains, How came it that the name of the Church exercised so potent a spell? What was

[1] By Dr. Cave. See Mr. Pattison's Essay, in *Essays and Reviews*.

this magic charm which could awaken the enthusiasm, and even inflame the passions of the multitude to such an extent, that the most powerful statesmen could not afford to put it out of their account?

The answer to these questions is not far to seek. The fact is, experience had convinced men, whether rightly or wrongly, that an Established Church which steered its course warily between Popery on the one side, and Puritanism on the other, was absolutely necessary for the welfare of the English nation. 'The people of England,' wrote a pamphleteer in 1715, 'can never be satisfy'd or think themselves safe if they believe the Church of England to be in danger.' This assertion was not only true at the time when it was written, but it might have been made with equal truth at almost any time during the century. It is not of course pretended that all those who raised the cries, still less all who were excited by them, were swayed by this feeling; but it is none the less true, that but for this feeling the cries could never have been raised; and though the fears aroused were often groundless, and often led to disastrous results, yet the feeling in itself was not a dishonourable nor an unreasonable one. If, then, in dealing with this subject, a Churchman must find much to be ashamed of, he may also find something of which to be proud.

The first cry which attracts our attention is, 'The Church in danger.' Indeed, all the rest were but repetitions in another form of this cry. It meets us at the very commencement of the era we are considering. The century was hardly two years old, when we find Atterbury sounding the alarm of the Church's impending danger. 'Dangers,' he writes, 'to the Church are now at a distance, while we have a gracious Queen on the throne, who, so far from doing any harm to the Church, will not in her time suffer any to be done to it. But, as distant as these dangers are, they may one day come.'[1]

Atterbury was a High Churchman, and 'The Church in danger' was essentially a High Church cry. Not that it was exclusively so. 'Both the Tories and the Whigs,' writes Lord Mahon, 'were accustomed to charge each other,

[1] Atterbury's *Charge to the Archdeaconry of Totnes*, in 1702.

as a ground of unpopularity, with endangering the Church.'[1] This is, no doubt, correct. The Whigs or Low Churchmen took up the cry of their adversaries, and retorted it not without effect. But in their mouths it had to suffer from all the disadvantages of the 'tu quoque' argument. The Tories or High Churchmen were its originators; and it was not under the form of 'The Church in danger,' that the cry of the Low Churchmen was loudest and most effectual. Nor even in the mouths of High Churchmen had the 'Church in danger' always the same meaning. Sometimes it meant that the political establishment was in danger, sometimes that the spiritual society was, sometimes that both were; sometimes it became a mere stalking-horse for Jacobitism.

Atterbury's prophecy of 1702 was soon fulfilled.[2] The High Churchmen were disappointed with the new Queen. They had hoped that the accession of Anne would prove a death-blow to the Low Church influence which had been more or less predominant during the reign of her predecessor. But, whatever her personal inclinations may have been, the Queen was not strong enough to effect a change.[3] Party spirit ran high, but Low Churchism was still in the ascendant. 'The very ladies,' wrote Swift to Stella in 1703, 'are split asunder into High Church and Low, and out of zeal for religion have hardly time to say their prayers.' The elections of 1705 gave an opportunity for a trial of strength. The vast majority of the clergy threw all the weight of their

[1] Lord Mahon's *History of England*, 1713-1783, i. 16.

[2] Indeed, in the year 1702 itself, the failure of the bill against Occasional Conformity raised the outcry. 'The bill,' writes Burnet, 'seemed to favour the interests of the Church, so hot men were for it, and the greater number of the bishops being against it, they were censured, as cold and slack in the concerns of the Church. . . . A great part of this fell on myself, for I bore a large share in the debates, both in the House of Lords and at the free conference. Angry men took occasion, from hence, to charge the bishops as enemies to the Church and betrayers of its interests,' &c.—*History of His own Times*, vol. iii. bk. vii. p. 433.

[3] 'The angry clergy,' writes Burnet, 'were dissatisfied with the court, and began now [1704] to talk of the danger the Church was in.'—*Hist. of His own Times*, bk. vii. vol. iv. p. 40. He also complains of 'the universities, Oxford especially, having been very unhappily successful in corrupting the principles of those who were sent to be bred among them; so that few of them escaped the taint of it, and the generality of the clergy were not only ill-principled, but ill-tempered: they exclaimed against all moderation as endangering the Church.'—p. 54.

enormous influence into the Tory scale. 'These clergy,' Leslie makes 'Observator' complain, 'do us all the mischief; they preach against us and influence the elections (May 1705). They have got most of the gentry (all but the Whig-rakes) from us; and among the common people, they have the sober and substantial party. But yet our numbers cannot be inconsiderable, while we have the fools and knaves on our side.'[1] What Leslie the Tory said ironically, Defoe the Whig said in all seriousness. 'Whence,' he asked, 'proceed the incessant clamours against the Queen, the railings and lampoons upon the government? Come they not from the mouths of the clergy? How is the pulpit daily profaned with invectives instead of sermons. The Queen is railed at as deserting the Church, the bishops as Presbyterians, the Low Church party as pulling down the Church.' But all was in vain. A majority of Whigs was returned, and the favourite measure of the High Churchmen, the Bill for preventing Occasional Conformity, was thrown out. Then the 'Church in danger' storm reached its height. The High Churchmen poured the vials of their wrath, not so much upon the statesmen as upon the Churchmen, whom they held to be traitors within the camp, the 'moderate' men who would betray their Church with a kiss.[2] 'A Low Churchman,' they said, 'is but

[1] *The Rehearsals*, vol. i. p. 260. 'The election,' writes Burnet, 'was managed with zeal and industry on both sides; the clergy took great pains to infuse into all people tragical apprehensions of the danger the Church was in; the universities were inflamed with this, and they took all means to spread it over the nation, with much vehemence; the danger the Church of England was in, grew to be as the word given in an army—men were known as they answered it: none carried this higher than the Jacobites. . . . Books were writ and dispersed over the nation with great industry, to possess all people with the apprehensions that the Church was to be given up, that the bishops were betraying it, and that the court would sell it to the Dissenters.'—*Hist. of His own Times*, bk. vii. vol. iv. 116.

[2] The outcry against 'moderation' and 'moderate men' raged before the eighteenth century began. 'I purposely,' writes Tillotson, when he was yet only a dean, 'mention his [Barrow's] moderation, and likewise venture to commend him for it, notwithstanding this virtue, so much esteemed by men of all ages, hath been of late declaimed against, as if it were the sum of all vices. I am still of opinion that moderation is a virtue, and one of the peculiar ornaments and advantages of the excellent constitution of our Church, and must at last be the temper of her members, especially her clergy, if we seriously intend the firm establishment of our Church, and will not let in Popery.'—Birch's *Life of Tillotson*, p. 97.

coldly and indifferently affected towards the Church, and not much concerned what becomes of her,—one that cares for none of these things; a character like to make an admirable son of the Church—or anything else. These *Low* Church-are *no* Churchmen. St. Paul says, he is not a Jew which is one outwardly; the same I say of a Churchman, that he is not a Churchman that is one outwardly as to profession and conformity; but that he is a Churchman who is one inwardly in his judgment and affection. The Low Churchmen are the very worst enemies the Church has. . . . Finding that the open enemies of the Church are not able to take it by storm, and that the Batteries signifie but little that are made against it from *without*, they would fain persuade those that are *within* (who will be the men that will ruin the Church, if ever it be ruin'd), to make a tame and voluntary surrender of it into their hands. And to this purpose a *Trumpet* is sent to her walls with the Popular and Plausible Plea of *Moderation*, another fallacious and imposing word. Moderation is found out to be a vertue at last. Well, but is not zeal a vertue too? Yes, yes, a good old Primitive, almost out of fashion vertue: such another as *Passive Obedience*, fit for times of innocence and simplicity, when men were better Christians than Politicians. . . . Though the Church is founded on Moderation, it is zeal that must defend and maintain it. Zeal is a much more excellent vertue at present than moderation, and, as things stand, much more wanted, and therefore now or never let us shew it. And so, God bless the Church of England, and inspire all her genuine and orthodox sons with the spirit of true zeal and courage, to stand firm by her in this perilous juncture. And may the Almighty preserve and defend her from the adversaries of the right hand and of the left, and from those of the *Middle* too; that is, in plain English, from the machinations of all Low Churchmen.'[1] A Low Churchman was 'a man of comprehensive charity, of large thoughts and of the modish Church,—an Anythingarian, who scorns to be confined to any one sect or religion;'[2] he 'made a shift

—Here, as in many other points, Tillotson exactly expresses the sentiments which ultimately prevailed in the eighteenth century.

[1] 'The Distinction of High Church and Low Church fairly stated, with some reflections upon the popular plea of moderation,' 1705.

[2] *The Rehearsals*, vol. iv. p. 300.

to keep in the communion and bosom of the Church, because it was warm ; to enjoy her dignities and preferments and maintain a sort of outward conformity, but had no inward liking for her constitution ; was ready upon every occasion to do the Church a mischief.' [1]

Of all the speeches, sermons, and pamphlets which came forth in this year of excitement, none made so great a sensation as a tract entitled the 'Memorial of the Church of England.' It was talked of in every coffee-house ; it provoked innumerable replies ; the Grand Jury of London and Middlesex ordered it to be burnt as a libel ; and finally, the Queen issued a proclamation, offering a reward for the discovery of its author.[2] This famous tract set forth very racily and forcibly the chief causes why the High Church party thought the Church in danger. 'The Church of England,' said the writer, 'is flourishing on the surface, but there is a hectic Feavour lurking in the very bowels of it, which if not timely cured will affect all the humours and at length destroy the very being of it. The sons of sectaries who overturn'd the Church in the last century remain. The sudden death of the king disappointed and alarm'd them ; but when they found the Head of the Church inclin'd, not only to forgive but to forget the past, then they began to challenge and provoke the Church as boldly as ever. Moderation was the word, the Passpartout that open'd all the place doors between Lizzard Point and Berwick-on-Tweed. They grew as moderate and indifferent as a usurer at a discourse of charity. They could vote for or against any bill the same Parliament, the same Session, nay, if occasion required it, the same day. But this moderation, which triumph'd so in England, could not be prevail'd on to stir one step over the Tweed. While our men of moderation yielded up every point here, on pretence of tenderness for erroneous consciences, the kirk there pursued her blows.' The writer complains that 'the Church does not hold the same rank in the esteem and confidence of the Queen that it did.' In reply to the argument of persecution brought against the Occasional Conformity Bill, he writes,

[1] Reply to *Low Churchman Vindicated*. See also Leslie's *Theol. Works*, vol. vi. Preface to *Wolf stript of the Shepherd's Clothing*.

[2] Probably Dr. Drake, a physician.

'If it be persecution to take away the trade of Hocus Pocus, and playing fast and loose with the Almighty, then persecution is the very bond and cement of all government. If divers persons were not almost daily persecuted at certain places called Old Bailies, we should neither sleep, walk, nor ride in safety.' He would have his readers to 'distinguish nicely between those that are *of* the Church only, and those that are both *of* the Church and *for* the Church.' 'Lawn sleeves,' he adds, 'are no sure sign of a Churchman.' Then, after having glanced at the Whig Ministry, who 'have forfeited the esteem and affection of the whole body of the Church to make themselves Heads of a prick-ear'd Faction who refuse to receive 'em as such,' he proceeds in a more hopeful strain, 'We have still some Bishops left who are true sons of the Church, whose reputation is not built upon the sandy bottom of a treacherous moderation, nor their heads vainly filled with chimerical notions of an impracticable comprehension, who, under the general indefinite term of Protestant, have not lost the important distinction between a Church of England man and a Fanatick.'[1]

The Low Churchmen were not slow to retort the cry of 'The Church in danger' upon their adversaries, but their arguments will be better treated under another head. The Queen herself, in her speech to Parliament, mildly protested against the prevalence of the cry. 'Some,' she said, 'are so very malicious as to suggest, even in print, that the Church is in

[1] 'Who are neither to be aw'd by Lambeth, nor wheedled by Sarum, out of their principles, but can construe the thirty-nine articles without an exposition,' &c.,—a hit at Archbishop Tenison and Bishop Burnet, whose work on the articles had been vehemently condemned.

In an amusing doggerel by J. Hughes, entitled *Hudibras Imitated* (1710), the following lines occur on the outcry against Low Churchmen :—

'The oyster wenches lock their fish up,
And cry "no presbyterian bishop ;"
The mouse-trap men lay save-alls by,
And 'gainst "Low Churchmen" loudly cry ;
A creature of amphibious nature,
That trims betwixt the land and water,
And leaves his mother in the lurch,
To side with rebels 'gainst the Church !
Some cry for "penal laws" instead
Of "pudding, pies, and gingerbread ;"
And some for "brooms, old boots and shoes"
Roar out, "God bless our Commons House.'

danger. I hope none of my subjects can entertain a doubt of my affection to the Church, or suspect it will not be my chief care to support it and leave it secure after me.' But the 'very malicious' persons were not silenced, and towards the close of the year it was thought advisable in the House of Lords solemnly to discuss the question, 'Is the Church in danger, or is it not?' So very vague and general a question seems to be more suited for a debating society than for an assembly of practical legislators. Its vagueness was curiously illustrated by the extraordinary variety of reasons adduced to show the danger of the Church. The non-passing of the Bill against occasional conformity; the passing of the Act of Security in Scotland; the not sending for the heir of the House of Hanover; the prevalent irreligion; the number of Atheists, Deists, and Socinians; the licentiousness of the press; the preaching of sermons 'wherein rebellion was encouraged, and resistance to the Higher Powers;' the increase of Dissenters; the setting up of seminaries by Dissenters and by Nonjurors; the conduct of the Universities, 'which inculcated heat and passion into their pupils, who brought the same into their parishes;' the undutiful behaviour of the clergy towards their bishops—these were in turn set forth as causes of the Church's danger. But, in spite of this formidable array of allegations, the House passed, by a majority of nearly two to one, a vote which sounds almost grotesque to modern ears. The Lords decided that 'the Church of England, which was rescued from the extremest danger by King William, is now, by God's blessing, in a most safe and flourishing condition; and whosoever goes about to insinuate that the Church is in danger under the Queen's administration, is an enemy to the Queen, the Church, and the kingdom.' The Commons sustained the resolution, and the Queen issued a proclamation ordering all judges, &c., to apprehend, prosecute, and punish such as falsely, seditiously, and maliciously suggest that the Church is in danger.[1]

It is, however, as impossible to allay panic cries as it is to make men religious by Act of Parliament. The very next year showed that the alarm was not yet quelled. When the bishops in the Upper House of Convocation drew up an

[1] See, *inter alia*, Burnet's *History of His own Times*, bk. vii. vol. iv. pp. 128–130.

address to the Queen, in which allusion was made to 'the groundless clamours of the Church being in danger,' the Lower House refused their assent.[1] They desired to thank the Queen for her zeal for the Church, but declined to express their 'full satisfaction as to the safety of the Church and their indignation against those who said the Church was in danger.' The outcry against occasional conformity was as loud as ever. It was 'a principle which ought to qualify its professors for a goal instead of a church, bring them to the scaffold instead of the altar, and advance them to Haman's punishment instead of his preferment,' 'a prodigious act of the most audacious villany,' 'Naaman's crime, more odious and stinking than his leprosy.' The occasional conformists were 'pious hypocrites,' 'double apostates,' 'miscreants,' 'men like Esau, that reprobate of God,' 'like Gehazi,. that will impudently lye, and not have so much shame as he had to disown it.'[2] 'I have heard it often objected,' wrote Swift, 'as a great piece of insolence in the clergy and others to say that the Church was in danger, when it was voted otherwise in Parliament, and the Queen herself did openly condemn all such insinuations. Notwithstanding which, I did then, and do still, believe the Church has since that vote been in imminent danger.'[3] And in that admirable piece of irony, the 'Argument against Abolishing Christianity,' the same writer gravely asserts, 'Nor do I think it wholly groundless, or my fears altogether imagi-

[1] Burnet (bk. vii. vol. iv. p. 138) says, 'The Lower House refused to join in the address, but would give no reason for their refusal; they drew an address of their own, in which no notice was taken of these aspersions' (about the danger of the Church). Surely the omission itself made the reason sufficiently obvious.

[2] From some assize sermons preached at Oxford, Leicester, &c., in 1707, quoted in a periodical called '*The Protester of the People*, by Issachar Barebone, one of themselves' (supposed to be Mr. Ralphs, of Isleworth).

[3] In No. 15 of the *Examiner*. The favour showed to 'about fifty Palatines, who were Lutherans and came over to England in 1708,' aroused the cry of the Church in danger, and in 1711 'it was pretended,' writes Burnet (*Hist. of His own Times*, bk. vii. vol. iv. p. 301), 'that in all that affair there was a design against the Church, and to increase the number and strength of the Dissenters.' The Act 'for a general naturalisation of all Protestants' was carried by a large majority in the House of Commons in 1709; 'but all those,' writes Burnet, (bk. vii. vol. iv. p. 248), 'who appeared for this large and comprehensive way were reproached for their coldness and indifference in the concerns of the Church; and in that I had a large share,' &c. The Scotch Union was violently denounced, as endangering the Church by admitting Presbyterians into Parliament.

nary, that the abolishing Christianity may perhaps bring the Church into danger, or at least put the Senate to the trouble of another securing vote. I desire I may not be mistaken; I am far from presuming to affirm or hint that the Church is now in danger, but we know not how soon it may be when the Christian religion is repealed.'

The fire which had never been extinguished was fanned into a flame by the extraordinary episode of the Sacheverell trial. The story of the famous Doctor is so well known that it need not here be repeated at length. Much has been said of the insignificance of the chief actor in this strange drama; and it is readily admitted that circumstances gave an adventitious fame to Dr. Sacheverell, to which his intrinsic merits would never have raised him. Although, however, the Doctor had no pretensions to be a profound theologian, his sermons show that he was by no means deficient in the qualities which make a successful agitator. For some time he had been using his powers to swell the 'Church in danger' cry. In the first year of Queen Anne's reign we find him at Oxford 'dooming all Dissenters to destruction.'[1] 'We must watch,' he exclaims, 'against these crafty, faithless, and insidious persons, who can creep to our altars, and partake of our Sacraments, that they may be qualified more secretly and powerfully to undermine us.' His famous assize sermon at Derby was still more violent, but his violence reached its climax when he preached at St. Paul's before the Lord Mayor on November 5, 1709, from the suggestive text, 'In perils among false brethren.'

In an evil hour for themselves the Whigs determined to 'impeach Sacheverell at the bar of the Lords in the name of all the Commons of England,'[2] and at one blow effected for

[1] Daniel Defoe, quoted by Mr. Tyerman in his *Life and Times of the Rev. Samuel Wesley*, ch. xiv.

[2] See *The Compleat History of the Affair of Dr. Sacheverell*, second ed., 1713. Bishop Fleetwood, in a pamphlet entitled *Rom. XIII. Vindicated from Abuse by a Curate of Salop*, writes, 'My business drawing me up to town, I heard the trial of the famous Doctor. Between the preaching and impeachment there were not ten men of sense and character in the city who did not absolutely condemn the sermon; but after the impeachment the High Church took the sermon and preacher into their protection, and weak people were made to believe the Church endangered in that trial. The Church was no more concerned than the mountain at the bottom of which my house stands.'

the High Churchmen what the High Churchmen for years had been striving in vain to effect for themselves. Here was the very opportunity desired for making the 'Church in danger' cry heard; and they were not slow to take advantage of it. The Doctor went in a kind of triumphal procession, day by day, 'to Westminster Hall through the streets from the Temple, in a chariot with large glasses, attended by coaches full of his abettors. Clergymen and others thrust their heads out of the coaches, fawned upon the mob and bowed to them to encourage their tumults.' The mob cried, 'God save the Church and the Doctor!' and knocked down all who would not cry out for Sacheverell and High Church. They assaulted Mr. Burgess's meeting-house, and talked of pulling down Mr. Hoadly's church and house. Sacheverell was prayed for in several churches as 'one suffering for the cause of the Church.' Some of the Queen's chaplains rallied round the Doctor at his trial. The Queen herself was said to be in his favour. She attended the trial, and as she drove through the streets the mob cried, 'God bless your Majesty! We hope your Majesty is for High Church and Sacheverell.' Sacheverell was found guilty by a majority of only six, and was ordered to abstain from preaching for three years. This sentence was regarded as tantamount to an acquittal, and the enthusiasm was intense. There were riots in the capital and in many of the principal towns. The mobs relieved their feelings by burning Hoadly in effigy. At Sherborne they drank Sacheverell's health on their knees, and made a bonfire on the top of the church tower. At Pontefract 'people thought it an honour to have their children christened Sacheverell. Some on their death-beds told their own ministers, if Dr. Sacheverell was there, he could save them.'[1] At other places money was given to the mob to drink the Doctor's health, and 'they threatened to knock in the head those who spoke against Sacheverell.' Forty thousand copies of the memorable sermon were sold, and the sale was not diminished by the fact that the sermon was ordered to be burned by the hangman. The Doctor himself made a triumphal progress to his living in North Wales, raising enthusiasm wherever he went, and contributing in no slight degree to the results of the

[1] See *Compleat History.*

elections, which terminated in the return of 'a glut of Tories.'[1]

The immediate consequences of this famous trial were sufficiently momentous. The downfall of the Whig Ministry, the conclusion of a great war, the disgrace of Marlborough, the imminent danger of the Hanoverian succession, may all be directly traced to this apparently insignificant incident. But the ultimate consequences were still more striking. It would not be too much to say that the Sacheverell trial gave a colour to English politics, and still more to English Churchmanship, for more than half a century. Those who 'roasted the parson' burnt their fingers in the flame; and not only did the burnt child, but his children and his children's children dread the fire.

If the Church in danger cry was henceforward less frequent and less loud, the comparative lull must be set down, to a great extent, to the same cause. During the last four years of Queen Anne's reign the party which had been most energetic in raising this cry was naturally appeased. 'The clergy,' writes Swift, 'were altogether in the interests and measures of the Ministry which had appeared so boldly in their defence during a prosecution against one of their members, when the whole sacred order was understood to be concerned.'[2] But they thought the safety of the Church was not yet secured. Among other dangers which threatened her was one arising from the existence of Dissenting seminaries. Even so good and moderate a man as Archbishop Sharp, though he had the good sense to feel and the courage to declare that 'the Church was not in danger, but that it was merely a struggle between Whig and Tory who should be uppermost,' yet 'feared very evil consequences from the many academies set up by Dissenters.'[3] Similar fears were expressed by others far more violently.[4] The result of such

[1] For further details of the Sacheverell episode see Mr. Lecky's *History of the Eighteenth Century*, i. 57, &c., published after the account in the text was written.

[2] Swift's *Last Four Years of Queen Anne*, bk. i. p. 50.

[3] *Life of Archbishop Sharp*, by his Son, p. 364.

[4] See a *Letter to a Noble Lord on the Case of Dr. Sacheverell*, 1710, in which these seminaries are termed 'corporations and societies of schism, to propagate a generation of vipers that will eat through the very bowels of our Church,' 'schis-

alarms was the passing of Sir W. Wyndham's Bill to prevent the growth of schism. The passage of this iniquitous measure through the Lords was greatly facilitated by Lord Bolingbroke, who called it 'a Bill of the last importance, since it concerned the security of the Church of England, the best and firmest support of the monarchy.'[1] Lord Bolingbroke posing as a defender of the Church is not an edifying spectacle. He certainly laid himself open to the taunt of Wharton, who 'was agreeably surprised to see some men of pleasure suddenly so religious as to set up for patrons of the Church.' Nevertheless it would be unfair to set down Bolingbroke, and men of similar character who professed a zeal for the Church, as mere hypocrites. They probably regarded the Church in all sincerity as a useful institution, which ought to be supported by all means, while, at the same time, they laughed in their sleeves at the doctrines which she taught.[2] Bolingbroke had an esoteric doctrine for his friends and an exoteric doctrine for the outer world.[3] The attitude was not a noble one, but it was intelligible; and it was the attitude of many others.

The accession of George I. was the signal for the revival of the 'Church in danger' cry. Some who had not joined in it before swelled it now. 'I remember,' writes Bishop Atterbury, 'when the dispute about the danger of the Church was in agitation in the late reign, I was one of those who thought it not in danger; not but what I was privy to what the Whigs drove at; but I knew we had the Queen on our side, and that nothing could ever influence her to act to the prejudice of the Church of England, the rights whereof she understood and always tenderly loved; but we may say, without reflection on anyone, the case is prodigiously altered.' Whatever Atterbury may have done before, his trumpet certainly now gave no uncertain sound. 'We say,' he writes, 'the Whigs resolve, if they can procure a House of Commons to their mind, to destroy the Church of England. Whereby I do not mean that they have set up

matical universities for the education of youth in all the poysonous principles of fanaticism and faction,' and so on.

[1] See Cooke's *Memoirs of Lord Bolingbroke*, second ed., ch. xxv. p. 259.

[2] See Lord Bolingbroke's famous *Letter to Sir W. Wyndham*, *passim*. Bolingbroke's conduct has been commented on in the chapter on the Deists in this work.

[3] See his *Letter to Mr. Pope*.

gibbets in their minds, and design to hang, draw, and quarter every member of the Church, nor that all the Whigs will come into the scheme; but we are persuaded that the generality of the Whigs are averse to the present hierarchy and government of the Church; that they neither like our doctrines nor our clergy, but would abolish bishops, priests, and deacons, assume the Church lands to themselves, appoint a small allowance to the parsons, and prescribe them what doctrines to teach from the pulpit; that they would introduce a general comprehension and blend up an ecclesiastical Babel of all the sects and heresies upon the face of the earth, and, lastly, deprive the bishops of their vote in the House of Lords, which particular they have contrived to render the less odious by furnishing the Reverend Bench, as far as was in their power, with such members as few Churchmen will pity or regret when they shall be unloaded.'[1]

Atterbury did not stand alone in his fears about the King's religion. Among others the irrepressible Dr. Sacheverell reappears on the scene. 'No sooner,' writes a pamphleteer,[2] 'was the Queen dead, and the King likely to come in peaceably as he did, but the distinguished trumpeters of the town began to alarm people with the fear of Church peril. Since his Majesty's arrival Sacheverell made an harangue that the King was not in the interests of our religion. The press is hard at work to beat a new alarm and fright the rabble into mutiny.' 'Yet,' writes another, 'did they continue with great industry to disperse scandalous and seditious libels, to infuse jealousies into the minds of the weak and unthinking multitude, and to revive the groundless, impudent clamours of the danger of the Church. Such were, "Stand fast to the Church," "Trick upon Trick," "Where are our Bishops now?" "The Religion of King George," "No Presbyterian Government," "The State Gamester; or, the Church of England's Sorrowful Lamentations."'[3]

The efforts were not in vain. There were riots in London

[1] 'English Advice to the Freeholders of England,' by Bishop Atterbury, 1714. See vol. xiii., of the *Somers Tracts*.

[2] 'The False Steps of the Ministry after the Revolution, in a Letter to my Lord ——,' 1714. See the *Somers Tracts*, vol. xiii. 572, &c.

[3] See Oldmixon's *History of England*, folio, p. 581.

on the King's birthday and on the Restoration Day, with cries of 'High Church and Ormond!' A print of King William was burnt in Smithfield. At Birmingham, Bath, Bristol, Chippenham, Norwich, Reading, and many other places there were tumults and cries of 'Down with the Whigs! Sacheverell for ever!' The Pretender's health was openly drunk in Ludgate, and Oxford was, of course, a centre of disaffection.[1]

The rebellion of 1715 was no doubt largely fomented in England by the 'Church in danger' cry. But it is no less true that that rebellion tended in no slight degree to allay the cry. Many were ready to shout that the Church was in danger who were by no means prepared to go the whole lengths of Jacobitism. It was a wise policy to identify the rebellion with the Church clamours.[2] A contemporary historian, after having described the execution of Mr. Paul, a Nonjuring clergyman, adds the following reflection: 'It seemed but just and reasonable that so unnatural and wicked a rebellion, which had been chiefly raised and carried on under the false pretence of the Church's danger, should in some measure be expiated by the blood of one of the principal instruments in propagating that delusion.'[3] The King, in his first speech to Parliament after the suppression of the rebellion, said, 'The endeavouring to persuade my people that the Church of England is in danger under my government has been the main artifice in carrying on the design. This insinuation, after the solemn assurance I have given, and my having laid hold on all opportunities to do everything that may tend to the advantage of the Church of England, is both unjust and ungrateful.' A pamphleteer in 1717, advocating the repeal of the Occasional Conformity and Schism Acts, writes, 'You tell me you are apprehensive upon the motion that there will be a revival of the cry of the danger of the Church. But there is no great matter in that, as long as there be no danger in it

[1] See *Continuation of Rapin's History*, by Tindal, vol. xviii. 374, 420, &c.; Smollett's *Continuation of Hume*, vol. ii., *passim*, *Caricature History of the Georges*, by T. Wright, ch. i., &c. &c.

[2] Addison's *Freeholder*, a periodical expressly written to defend the Government, gives a large space to the Church in danger cry in connection with the rebellion. See Nos. 7, 14, 22, 32, 47, 52, &c.

[3] *Quadriennium Annæ Postremum*, 'The Political State of Great Britain,' &c., by Boyer, vol. xii. p. 63.

to real religion, about which, they that cry out about the danger of the Church are commonly least concerned.' I hope the magic of that cry is almost worn out and spent. If things are come to that pass, that the Church can never be safe till King George is dethroned and we have a new Revolution, I'll venture to say (be the consequence what it will) 'tis no Church of God's appointing; it is a Church for which no true Protestant can have any affection. It can be none but Parson Paul's and Parson Howell's Church. It must come to nothing, or else we must at once be Papists, Slaves and Fools. And from such, good Lord, deliver us!'[1] The very title of the Act in favour of which the pamphlet quoted above was written, 'An Act for strengthening the Protestant Interest,' indicates that the fear of the Church's danger was now overruled by another fear, that of the danger to Protestantism through the machinations of the Jacobites. In vain the High Church party asked whether the Church was to come over to the Dissenters or the Dissenters to the Church.[2] The measure was passed, though not without great opposition. This association of the cry with political disaffection is probably the reason why it was but feebly raised in connection with such events as the practical suppression of Convocation resulting from the great Bangorian controversy, and the exile of Atterbury[3]—events which in earlier days would have raised a storm as furious as that which the Sacheverell trial produced. The last occasion on which the cry was raised with anything like its old effect, was during the elections of 1722, when an attack was made upon the court party by exciting the old mob prejudices against a Commonwealth and the Dissenters.[4]

The 'Church in danger' cry in its old sense was henceforth

[1] *Quadriennium Annæ Postremum*, vol. xiii. p. 417.

[2] See Bogue and Bennett's *History of the Dissenters*, vol. iii. p. 133.

[3] Both these events roused, of course, great excitement among the clergy, but it did not spread among the multitude. Indeed, in the latter case, the mob appears to have been rather on the other side. 'While we were in the church,' writes R. Thoresby, 'there was a mighty shout in the street, which, we were told, was upon the Bishop of Rochester passing by, some crying out "No Popish bishop, no English Cardinal." But the guards restrained them as much as possible. From mobs of all sorts, *Libera nos, Domine.*'—*Diary* for May 11, 1723, ii. 377.

[4] See *Caricature History of the Georges*, ch. ii.

efficacious as an obstructive rather than as a destructive force. The party which had been most active in raising it was, after the second decade of the century, well nigh extinct. Most of the old High Churchmen who still survived had joined the ranks of the Nonjurors or had become professed Jacobites. But the cry was still held in reserve, and was ready to break out on the slightest provocation. The provocation, however, was rarely given. The powerful Minister who directed the affairs of the nation during the whole of the reign of George I. and the earlier part of that of his successor, had as wholesome a horror of a Church clamour as he had of a French or Spanish war. The recollection of the Sacheverell trial had made a vivid impression upon his mind which could never be effaced;[1] and his immediate successors in power shared his alarm. Hence, every attempt to repeal the Test and Corporation Acts was quietly shelved for fear of raising the obnoxious cry. Various efforts were made at different times[2] to induce Walpole to aid the Dissenters; but, however much he might personally be disposed to do so, the fear of this terrible cry always held him back.

It was only natural that the Tories should make political capital out of this backwardness of the Whigs to help those who had always been their firmest friends. 'They lean,' it was said, 'upon the Dissenters when out of power, and esteem them a burthen upon them when in it.'[3] 'What service,' asked the 'Craftsman' in 1737, 'hath Walpole done to deserve the favour of the Dissenters? It cannot surely be his services last year with regard to the Sacramental Test; for it is well known what part he acted himself, and ordered his creatures to act, in that affair; though I am told that what the Dissenters asked and expected from him was only in pursuance of repeated promises. But it seems, matters of much greater consequence were then in embryo, which made it improper to perform them.' The convenient season for performing these promises was long in coming. Well might the Dissenters say, with a sort of plaintive resignation, 'A Minister is a

[1] See Coxe's *Memoirs of Sir R. Walpole.*

[2] In 1730, 1733, 1736, &c.

[3] 'Letter from a Dissenter to the author of the *Craftsman*, occasion'd by his paper of October 27th last,' 1733.

fading flower; his ministry a temporary bloom. The King (may God long preserve his sacred life) is our only Refuge, and his Royal Word may be our trust.'[1] The Whigs defended themselves by throwing all the blame upon the Tories. 'And pray,' they said, 'to whom is it chiefly owing that this Repeal of the Test Act could never yet be obtained? Is it not probable—more than probable—that the true reason why the friends of liberty have never yet attempted it hath been just apprehension lest the Tories and their trumpeters of sedition should raise a general clamour against it, revive the old cry of the danger of the Church, and open a new scene of confusion in the nation?'[2] The fact seems to have been that at this period the differences between political parties was not so much a difference of principles as of individuals. Certainly, the fear of raising the 'Church in danger' cry was vividly present to both parties, and produced a dogged opposition to all change. This cry was ready to be raised on every possible occasion. The immigration of foreign Protestants into England in 1722, the bill 'for the more easy recovery of tithes from Quakers' in 1736, and the bill 'to prevent the further alienation of lands by will in mortmain,' all gave the signal for raising it. Walpole plucked up heart of grace, and the two last bills passed the Commons by large majorities; but in the Lords the Bishops raised vehemently against them the old cry of the Church's danger. 'The Court,' we are told, 'was angry with the Bishops for trying to revive the long-deadened spirit of Church quarrels by sending circular letters through their dioceses to alarm the clergy about the Mortmain and Quaker Bills.'[3] The Church of Queen Anne's day, and the Church of the early Georgian era, differed very widely in many respects, but it was equally sensitive in both periods on the subject of the danger cry.

Warburton's views, though they bore the impress of his own marked individuality, were to a certain extent typical of those of a large class of Divines in the later era. It has become rather too much the fashion to abuse this curious representative of a bygone state of feeling. For, after all, he only expressed in a more forcible—sometimes, we may add, in a

[1] See *Craftsman*, No. 509. [2] *Craftsman*.
[3] Lord Hervey, in his *Memoirs of the Reign of George II.*

more scurrilous—form, a very general sentiment; though on many points of detail, no doubt, he stood alone, except in so far as he was supported by his faithful henchman, Hurd. Whatever Warburton propounded was, in his opinion, absolutely irrefragable; and they were fools or knaves who attempted to gainsay him. As his apparently paradoxical theory of the Divine Legation of Moses was 'proved as demonstrably as a mathematical problem,' so his adjustment of the relations between Church and State was in every way 'totus, teres atque rotundus.' The Church surrendered to the State her independence and authority, while she was protected and supported by the legislature. The State selected for alliance, from motives of policy, the strongest religion, and should change, if it did not maintain its superiority. Other societies should have toleration, but not so as to injure the established religion; and to guard against this danger the Test Law was necessary. 'Thus,' he said, 'I have defended the justice and equity of our happy establishment at a time when the enemies of all Church establishments were commonly supposed to have demonstrated it to be indefensible.' If any presumptuous spirit asked the bishop's authority for this compact between Church and State, he triumphantly asked them in return to show him the original contract between the government and the governed. It will readily be seen that in so nice an adjustment the slightest attempt at alteration in any way might raise the 'Church in danger' cry. One straw more would break the camel's back; one straw less might render the animal fractious. It was dangerous to trust the Church with more freedom. The bishop looked with considerable suspicion on any attempt to restore the active functions of Convocation. That audacious assembly might dispute or wish to see the original compact on which the alliance between the Church and State was founded; nay, it might actually reach such a pitch of audacity as to call in question the soundness of the reasoning in the Divine Legation.[1] On the other hand, any

[1] 'Convocation, by giving up their old right of taxing themselves, seem to have given up their right of meeting and debating. . . . As to that part of Convocation's office which is supposed to consist in watching over the faith and principles of the people, I should question whether it would have any good effect. Bad

step in the direction of giving more privileges to her enemies was fraught with the utmost danger to the Church. 'Touch the Commons,' said Mr. Spenlow, 'and down goes the country.' 'Touch the Test,' said Bishop Warburton in effect, 'and down goes the Church.' It is true that this Test was practically a mere 'brutum fulmen.' Year by year an Act of Indemnity was passed which rendered its provisions innocuous; and the good bishop seems to have made no objection to this arrangement. But it was absolutely necessary to keep the Test as a sort of rod in pickle for what the bishop would not have hesitated to call the fool's back.

Before concluding this sketch of the effects produced by this, the most popular and formidable of the Church cries of the eighteenth century, it may be added that the danger of the Church was not altogether a mere phantom of the imagination. The Church did pass through a serious crisis in the first half of the eighteenth century. The attacks of Deists and Socinians were bold and noisy attempts to undermine its foundations. Still more alarming, because more insidious, was the tendency to reduce the Church to the degrading position of a mere appanage to the State. The circumstances under which Convocation was silenced were so exceptional, and involved so many questions which, unfortunately, had at that time become hopelessly mixed up with Church affairs, that a full investigation of them would lead us too far away from our point. But it is surely obvious on the face of it that the existence of a vast society which has no organ for expressing its collective voice is an anomaly. It is true that there was an almost unanimous feeling in favour of maintaining the Church establishment; it is true that statesmen courted it, that mobs shouted for it, that its clergy contended for every jot and tittle of its privileges, that its assailants covered every attack upon it under the most vehement protestations of meaning no harm to it. But, in spite of this apparent security, there was some cause for alarm. The Church was in danger of being smothered to death by the caresses of its friends, if not of being crushed to death by the blows of its

books might be censured; good ones might too. Burnet's exposition, I find, was fulminated. I should have been in pain for the *Divine Legation*.'—*Letters from Warburton to Hurd*, second ed., letter cxliv.

enemies. Those who could read the signs of the times when the cry was most rife, dimly foresaw what actually happened. The contrast between the efficiency of the Church in Queen Anne's reign, and in those of the first two Georges, is very marked.[1] In the earlier period there was a far better appreciation of the Church's spiritual functions, far greater activity among her clergy; far more real co-operation in her spiritual work among the laity. And the causes of the degeneration may certainly be found, although mixed up with many temporary panics and many quite irrelevant questions, in the arguments used by those who swelled the cry of 'The Church in danger.'

Since the Reformation the cry of 'No Popery' has seldom failed, and probably seldom will fail, to produce an effect in England. In the early years of the eighteenth century the cry of danger to the Church from Latitudinarians and Puritans was met by the counter cry of danger from Papists, open and disguised. In the great paper warfare of 1705 the Low Churchmen agreed with their High Church brethren that the Church was in danger, but contended that the real danger lay in the encouragement to Popery which High Church politics gave. It does not appear that they, as a rule, suspected what would now be called the 'Romanising tendencies' of High Churchism; indeed, it was obvious that High Churchmen like Leslie and Brett were as Protestant as the lowest of Low Churchmen. The real force of the charge lay in their tendency to Jacobitism, which would bring back a Popish monarch with Popery in his train.[2] The many opponents of Sacheverell dwelt strongly upon the point, that the result of the ascendency of his party must be the re-establishment of Popery. In the general election of 1714 the danger of the Church from 'Papistical' proclivities was a very popular and effective cry, and the rebellion of 1715 naturally

[1] For one instance out of many, take the utter collapse of the scheme of good Archbishop Sharp and others, 'concerning Bishops being provided for the plantations.'—The death of Anne frustrated the design. See Anderson's *History of the Colonial Church*, vol. iii. ch. xxii. p. 74, &c.

[2] 'And shall a Pope-bred princeling crawl ashore?'

—Dr. Young's *Poems*, 'Reflections on the Public Situation.'

added point and force to the charge. But the subject is so closely connected with Jacobitism, that there is no need to repeat what has already been written under that head.

During the interval between the rebellions of 1715 and 1745, the most sensitive of Protestants could scarcely be roused to fear any danger from Popery. The Romanists and supposed Romanisers were kept down with a high hand. 'If it be lawful,' wrote a pamphleteer in 1723, as if he were making a most obvious and reasonable reflection which would commend itself to everybody, 'and if self-preservation will justify the outlawry and banishing of Papists, it cannot be any injustice to deprive them of but part of their estates; and yet less, to lay on them such a gentle tax as 100,000*l.* for one year, to help towards defraying the charge the nation is kept at to defend itself against the dangers with which the Papists and their friends threaten it.'[1] In the same spirit, a few years before, Swift had spoken with the utmost naïveté of 'our Nonjurors whom we double tax, forbid their conventicles, and keep under hatches, without thinking ourselves possessed with a persecuting spirit, because we know they want nothing but the power to ruin us.'[2] On every conceivable—and inconceivable—occasion the 'No Popery' cry was raised. For instance, a strong prejudice was awakened against the importation of Italian Opera singers,—a class not generally supposed to be very active proselytisers, whatever their religious opinions may be,—on the ground that they might bring Popery in their train. The unpopularity of the Methodists was largely increased by the absurd rumour that they were Papists in disguise. The rebellion of 1745 of course gave a fresh handle to those who desired to raise the alarm of Popery, but the alarm, like the event which raised it, was neither serious nor long-lived.[3] Six years later, the alteration of

[1] *Considerations on the Present State of England*, 1723. In estimating these alarms of Romanism, it is only fair to remember that the history both of England and foreign nations, as well as the events which were actually going on at the time abroad, gave some just cause for fear. See Lecky's *History of the Eighteenth Century*, vol. i. ch. ii. 268, for illustrations of this point. See also a pamphlet entitled *The Danger of the Church and Kingdom from Foreigners considered*, published in 1722.

[2] *Examiner*, No. xxxvi.

[3] See *The True Patriot*, Fielding, vol. viii. 'Imaginary journal of an honest

the Calendar according to the Gregorian computation produced another panic. Ridiculous as the cry of 'No Popery' may sound in connection with a change which was so obviously desirable and which had been already adopted in almost all other countries, it is highly probable that if the popular alarm had not of late years been much allayed, the alteration would have caused a far louder outcry than it did. The fact that a Pope originated it[1] and that it was first adopted in Roman Catholic countries, was more than enough to awaken the suspicions of a generation which was wont to couple together the Pope and the Devil, as being almost to an equal extent the arch enemies of mankind. If Popery could no longer enslave British Protestants all their lives long, it did what it could by robbing them of eleven days of those lives.[2]

For the next quarter of a century it was difficult for the most ingenious to discover or invent any traces of the lurking danger of Popery. That the feeling against Popery was as strong as ever, we gather from incidental notices, such, *e.g.* as the record of Bishop Newton that 'he had stopped the building of a public Mass House at Bristol,' 'and,' adds the bishop, evidently proud of his achievement, 'nothing of the like kind has ever been attempted since; only a bastard kind of Popery, Methodism, has troubled Bristol since that time.'[3]

tradesman after the Jacobite conquest' (No. 10, Jan. 7, 1746) :—'Jan. 3. Queen Anne's statue in St. Paul's Churchyard taken away, and a large crucifix erected in its room.'

[1] Gregory XII. in 1582.

[2] One of the most curious incidents in connection with the change of style was that Archdeacon Blackburn preached a sermon on the subject on Old Christmas day, advocating the abolition of all Church festivals. He invited his parishioners (who, like many others, disliked the change) to church on the 5th of January, told them he could not by law read the Christmas service on that day, and that Christ's birthday was altogether a very uncertain matter. His main objections, however, to the Christian festivals were of a practical character. 'Such revels and disorders,' he said, 'as are practised at Easter, Whitsuntide, and above all at Christmas, are most expressly contrary to the purity of the Christian religion.' See Hunt's *Religious Thought*, iii. 302.

[3] *Life of Dr. Thomas Newton, Bishop of Bristol*, by Himself. A further evidence is the famous controversy as to whether Bishop Butler died a Papist, which 'was not improbable, when it is considered that he put up the Popish insignia of the cross in his chapel when at Bristol; and in his last episcopal charge has squinted very much towards that superstition' (quoted from one of the

But in 1778 Sir George Saville proposed and carried through Parliament a bill for the Relief of English Roman Catholics, which produced the revival of the 'No Popery' cry in greater force and vigour than ever. The measure was dictated only by common humanity; and all but the merest fanatics would now agree in calling it a scant and tardy act of justice to a considerable and not disloyal body of his Majesty's subjects. It simply provided for the repeal of the iniquitous 'punishment of Priests or Jesuits who taught or officiated in the services of their Church; the forfeiture of Popish heirs, and the power of the son or next heir to take possession of his kinsman's estate, and the debarring of Roman Catholics from the power of acquiring legal property by other means than descent.'[1] But the removal from our Statute Book of what had long been a disgrace to it roused the morbid sensibilities of the Ultra-Protestants. The storm was some time in brewing; but it at last burst forth in one of the most scandalous riots which have occurred in the annals of English history. The leader, a well-meaning but half-deranged nobleman, was a mere tool in the hands of designing knaves and violent fanatics. The history of the 'Gordon Riots' is so well known, that it is needless to record at length how Lord George marched at the head of twenty thousand men to present to Parliament the monster Petition against the relaxation of the Penal Laws; how Newgate was broken open and the houses of peaceful citizens burnt, and all London for some days left to the mercy of the mob. One is thankful to find that the bishops, as on many other occasions, were more large-hearted than the so-called friends of the Church; but they were soundly abused and roughly handled in consequence.[2] London held an unenviable prominence in this revival of the 'No Popery' cry; but the alarm spread to other places. Bristol, for instance, disgraced itself by rejecting as its representative the most splendid orator and one of the greatest and best men of that or any other time, because he

numerous pamphlets published on the controversy). Archbishop Secker defended his friend's memory, but even he was a little staggered by the cross.

[1] See Lord Mahon's *History of England*, 1713–1783, vol. v. p. 305, &c.

[2] See the *History of Lord George Gordon*, Edinburgh, 1780, and *The London Courant* for June 3, 1780.

had the courage and humanity to support Sir G. Saville's Bill.[1]

It is almost inconceivable, but it is nevertheless true, that the 'Gordon Riots' were justified by Christian men. The writer of the 'History of Lord George Gordon' adds the following reflection to his account of the trial of that misguided nobleman :—'To those who dread no danger from the relaxation of our penal statutes, his Lordship's zeal will be deemed to border on fanaticism; but such as allow themselves to reflect on the native malignity and destructive tendency of Popery will not think so.' And, not to weary the reader with quotations from the voluminous literature on the subject, the following extract from a sermon preached on Lord George's acquittal, together with some hymns composed for the occasion, may suffice as a specimen of sentiments which doubtless were not at all infrequent. 'Have we not,' asks the preacher, 'lately beheld, to the grief and wounding of our souls, Popery lifting up her face like Agag, who came out delicately with "Surely the bitterness of death is over?" Have we not seen chapels and schools erecting in various parts of this metropolis and in other parts of the kingdom, in order to instill into the minds of youth principles of a diabolical nature,—principles inimical to a Protestant Government?. . . . I think it an incumbent duty to cry to God, that if it please Him I may be helped at all times with a godly zeal to try to stem the Tyberean streams which apparently threaten an awful inundation to the British Empire;'[2] and much more to the same effect.

A few specimens of the hymns in which 'real Protestants' gave vent to their feelings on this affecting occasion are worth quoting :—

SUPPLICATION FOR LORD GEORGE GORDON.

Defend the dear, the noble youth
Who's suffering in the cause of truth.

[1] Edmund Burke had before this been accused of being a Jacobite and a Jesuit. Witness Gilray's caricature of 'Neddy St. Omers.'

[2] '*Innocence in eminent lustre, and malevolence confounded*, a thanksgiving sermon on February 11, 1781, on the happy and honourable deliverance of Lord George Gordon, President of the Protestant Association, preached by W. Aug. Clarke at Red Cross Street, No. 16.' London, 1781.

Oh! let not Hell nor Rome succeed,
Nor Zion mourn, nor Gordon bleed,
When the important day appears,
Big with thy people's hopes and fears,
Charg'd with concerns immensely great,
Decisive of their Gordon's fate, &c.

A THANKSGIVING FOR LORD GEORGE GORDON.

When Gordon at the awful barr
Stood, lo! his Master too was there;
Our God appear'd to plead his cause,
And sav'd him from the lion's jaws, &c.

HYMNS COMPOSED ON THE OCCASION OF THE DELIVERANCE OF LORD GEORGE GORDON.

Our noble brother and our friend,
Who in Thy righteous cause did stand
With flaming love and pious zeal,
To stanch the plague of Rome and Hell.
O fill his soul with grateful praise,
Support and bless him all his days;
And instrumental may he be
In rooting out all Popery! &c.

A Churchman may be relieved to find that this sermon was preached and these precious effusions sung by Dissenters; but it is only fair to quote another specimen from a sermon by a clergyman of the Church of England:—'Many intelligent friends of their king and country most seriously bewail that Act of Parliament which has eventually warmed Popery into growing life ever since May 28, 1778, and thrown the yet remaining statutes against that abomination into a sounder doze; and though we detest every form of rioting and injustice, yet love to God and man call aloud upon us to take every constitutional method for the repeal of this Act. This is a heaven-taught Intolerance. . . . Toleration seems to be due to *Protestant* worship of every name among us, but not to Popish; and it is happy for England that this Vox Dei is also vox populi.'[1]

[1] *The Incurable Abomination*, by F. Reader, 1781.

After the subsidence of the Gordon riots, the 'No Popery' cry was not loud enough to require notice in these pages.

Every one who has even a superficial knowledge of English History is aware of the bitter prejudice which existed in early times against the Jews. After having been cruelly persecuted in the reigns of the early Plantagenets, they were banished from England from the time of Edward I. till the Restoration of 1660, when they were tacitly permitted to return. By the middle of the eighteenth century they had become a fairly wealthy and numerous community. In 1753 a bill was carried in the House of Lords, mainly through the instrumentality of Lord Hardwicke, allowing Jews to be naturalised without receiving the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. In the Commons it met with violent opposition, but finally passed. The Jewish triumph, however, was not yet won. A wail of horror burst forth from the British nation. Perhaps the very loudest and fiercest, while it lasted, of all the Church cries of the eighteenth century was raised. It lasted a short time, only because it gained its object: in consequence of the violence of the outcry, the Act was repealed. The furious pamphlets, sermons, and poems in which the measure was assailed, would really lead us to believe that the feeling towards the Jews was not much changed since the days of Front de Bœuf and Isaac of York.[1] 'Are not the Jews,' it was asked, 'open and professed enemies of our holy religion? Are they not bound in conscience to destroy it? The argument that they have no other country to remove to is far from an argument in their favour. Why have they no place to go to? Is it not by a decree of Providence, as a curse for their obstinacy, which, while they persist in, I cannot help thinking every one who countenances them, a Partaker of their evil deeds.'[2] Another, who took for his motto Acts xvi. 20,

[1] 'In a few months,' wrote Horace Walpole, 'the whole nation found itself inflamed with a Christian zeal, which was thought happily extinguished with the ashes of Queen Anne and Sacheverell. Indeed, the holy spirit seized none but the populace and the very lowest of the clergy.'—*Memoirs of George II.*, for 1753.

[2] 'A full answer to a fallacious apology artfully circulated throughout the kingdom in favour of the naturalisation of the Jews,' 1753. See also 'Some Queries relative to the Jews, occasion'd by a late sermon, 1753. To the printer of the *Norwich Mercury*.'

wrote,—'The Jews have exceedingly troubled *our* city of late, and they are like to trouble it much longer. The City of London in Common Council with great unanimity addressed the House of Commons against the bill, which passed by a great majority. The bill is entirely of a religious nature. It must have a malignant influence on our religion. It strikes at the root of our present establishment, and affects the very being of Christianity. The Jews ought to be more concerned to become Christians than Englishmen. God cast them out; we take them in. God expelled them; they come to us expelled, and we naturalise them. What He made their punishment, we turn into a reward. . . . The Lord sent them punishments, and therefore it would be prudent to put off naturalising the Jews until He take them away. They who now pretend to be Jews are blasphemers; and shall we naturalise blasphemy? They are the synagogue of Satan; and shall we license Satan's Meeting House? God forbid! The thoughts fill us with horror. God Almighty keep us from this infatuation, and give us not over to this dreadful guilt!'[1] There was a curious blending of the temporal and spiritual in some of the alarms. 'With God there is mercy; with the Jew there is no mercy. If this bill becomes law, we are Jewish slaves, and what is more dreadful, without any hopes of relief from God. For this bill is, in its whole nature, a voluntary renunciation of the providence and protection of God, and leaving no room for the continuance of His mercy. . . . Awake, therefore, my fellow Britons, Christians, and Protestants! It is not Hannibal at your gates, but the Jews that are coming for the keys of your Church doors. Let us, if we have love and zeal for our religion, our king, and our country, pray that we may not be delivered up to the merciless will of the Jews, who know no goodness but that which blasphemed and murdered the Lord from heaven; nor desire any glory but that of putting an end to all Christian churches, kings, and kingdoms.'[2] The 'Craftsman' attacked the measure with even more than its usual ability. It ironically answered the objection that 'the Act gave the lie to Scripture,' in a vein worthy

[1] '*A modest apology for the citizens and merchants of London who petitioned the Houses of Commons against naturalising the Jews*, 1753.

[2] *London Evening Post*, May 24, 1753.

of Swift himself:—'There was a time when this objection might be allowed to carry with it some degree of weight. While Christianity subsisted in this kingdom, it would have been the grossest absurdity to introduce a bill of this nature. But the Christian dispensation has entirely disappeared from among us, and I believe, in the memory of the oldest person now living, no trace of it can be found; which is, in my opinion, a conclusive argument in favour of this Naturalisation Act. Were it in any way inconsistent with the religion now in fashion, I flatter myself it would have met with opposition from a certain Bench in the H—— of L——; but as nothing of this kind was offered, it is to be presumed that Judaism properly coincides with our present disposition in Church and State; and I would therefore recommend this doctrine to be preached from the pulpit for the better quieting of the minds of men; and if the right reverend prelates would issue out pastoral letters to the purpose, the remedy would be quicker in its operation, and the mistaken notions which the common people have imbibed would be the sooner effaced.'[1] The silence of the Bishops caused bitter invectives to be uttered against them. 'The present set of Bishops,' it was said, 'is the only one since the time of Christ that would have countenanced so Anti-Christian a measure.'[2] The Bishop of Norwich, who was not only silent, but actually voted for the bill, was the object of special vituperation. 'Soon after holding a confirmation, he was called upon by the mob to administer the rite of circumcision, and a paper was affixed to the church doors, stating that next day, being Saturday, his lordship would confirm the Jews, and the day following the Christians.'[3]

It seems to have been seriously apprehended that the result of the Act would be the ascendency of the Jews in England, and scriptural examples were quoted in support of this theory.—'I do not,' writes Issachar Barebone, 'pretend to foreknow the terms of this coalition, nor how wide the door is in time to be set open for the admission of these

[1] *Craftsman* for July 7, 1753.

[2] See Lord Mahon's *History of England*, iv. 25. See also a pamphlet entitled *Examination of the Act passed last Session of Parliament for permitting the Foreign Jews to be naturalised without receiving the Sacrament.*

[3] See Lord Campbell's *Lives of the Chancellors*, vol. v. ch. xxxv. p. 124.

enacted vagrants according to Scripture Statute. . . . The example of Joseph would not go very far in recommending a Jewish administration. "Behold, I have bought you this day, and your land for Pharaoh," are not very captivating words to a British ear.' [1]

The measure was attacked in poetry as well as prose:—

THE JEWS' TRIUMPH. A BALLAD.

In Seventeen Hundred and Fifty Three,
The style it was changed to Popery,
But that it is liked we don't all agree:
Which nobody can deny.

But, Lord! how surprized when they heard of the news,
That we were to be servants to circumcised Jews,
To be negroes and slaves instead of True Blues:
Which nobody can deny.

. . . . . .

Are these, then, the people that's mark'd with the Brand,
That, the clergy have preach'd, shall inherit no land,
Which now they have gain'd against God's command?
Which nobody can deny.

[1] '*The Protester on behalf of the People*, by Issachar Barebone, one of themselves, No. 3, June 16, and No. 10, Aug. 4, 1753.

The same fear of the predominance of the Jews is expressed with considerable humour by the *Craftsman*, in a dramatic farce:—

'The Temple of Laverna.—Act I. Scene I.

'*First Broker.*—What have the great onès resolved upon, pray, sir? Shall we have a fixed place of residence at last? Is it all settled? Have we baffled the prophecies of the Galileans? Have we, sir?

'*Caiaphas.*—Hold your tongue, you blockhead, the b——ps are for us, but things a'nt quite ripe yet.

'*Enter French gentleman with his friend.*—(Stock Exchange.)

'*Friend.*—Do you see that Jew there? He is the very altar of the State. We are taught to look upon this gentleman as the support of our Constitution in Church and State.

'*Frenchman.*—Marblieu! a Juif de support of de religion! Quel paradox!

'*Friend.*—However inconsistent this may appear, it is most indisputably true. . . . In France a man does not enjoy liberty of conscience with respect to religion.

'*Frenchman.*—Religion! de Englis religion! How you call it?

'*Friend.*—Tho' we are shamefully negligent, still we are Protestants.

'*Frenchman.*—C'est à dire, you are not Papist, your religion den is negative,' &c. &c.—*The Craftsman*, June 1753.

Why the Bishops were mute at what they have preach'd,
Is beyond comprehension, and not to be reach'd,
Except Jews' presentations reverting to each :
Which nobody can deny.

But 'tis hop'd that a mark will be set upon those
Who are friends to the Jews and the Christians' foes,
That the nation may see how Deism grows :
Which nobody can deny.

Then cheer up your spirits, let Jacobites swing,
And Jews on our bell-ropes hang when they ring
To our Sovereign Lord, great George the King :
Which nobody can deny.

THE JEW NATURALISED; OR, THE ENGLISH ALIENATED. A BALLAD.

Our rulers have dared the decree to revoke,
Which was in Judea so frequently spoke,
T' incorporate with us that fugitive Tribe :
But what is it Britons won't do for a bribe?
Sing Tantarara, Jews all! Jews all!

After several other verses, all to the effect that opponents of the bill were bribed, the ballad concludes—

Thus all in conjunction were tongue-tyed by Pelf,
And each pass'd his vote—pray, for whom?—for himself ;
Such actions as these most apparently shows,
That if Jews are made English, the English are Jews!
Sing Tantarara, Jews all! Jews all!

The panic was cleverly held up to ridicule by a friend of the Jews. 'The Act,' he wrote, 'will be very pernicious to the inland trade of these kingdoms. It must sensibly lessen the consumption of Brawn, Hams, Bacon, and Black Puddings. Also, it will be prejudicial to victuallers, poulterers &c., it being well known that the more rigid Jews always choose to kill and dress their own meat. The lost Ten Tribes, when they hear of this Act, will undoubtedly discover themselves and take advantage of it. The Act has put it into the power of one single person to ruin the nation. There is well known to the learned a certain person commonly and emphatically styled, The Wandering Jew. If this old vagrant should take

advantage of the Act,—who must have acquired such a prodigious knowledge of the world,—what harm he may do us!'[1] and much more to the same effect.

But people were not to be laughed out of their fears. It was thought that if the bill passed, the Church would be undone; the Jews would come from all countries and settle in England, and Protestants would be ruined by their engrossing all the home trade. The question asked of candidates at an election was, 'Are you, sir, a Jew or a Christian?' The popular cries were, for this year, 'No Jews,' 'No long beards nor whiskers,' 'Christians for ever.'[2]

'I remember,' said an old peer in the House of Lords about the middle of the century, 'when the word Church would have raised a mob, whenever it was used; but now, thank God, it would as soon raise a Ghost.' But events occurred towards the close of the century which revived the old cry under a slightly different form. During the reigns of the first two Georges, the Church must have been rather embarrassed by her connection with the reigning Sovereigns. The utmost stretch of her traditional loyalty could go no further than to express thankfulness that 'the Church was safe under His Majesty's administration,' that 'His Majesty had given his royal word (a word which never was broken) to protect her interests,'—and phrases of that sort. But George III. was born and bred a Churchman; in his own simple way, he was a devout and conscientious worshipper at the national altars; his private life was stainless; he favoured none but those whose orthodoxy was beyond question, and he had married one who was as rigid and pure in doctrine and practice as himself. Under such a monarch, 'Church and King' might well become a favourite rallying cry for all good Churchmen. From the beginning of his reign a strong 'Church and King'

[1] From a pamphlet in the British Museum on the Jews Act of 1753.

[2] See *An Address to the Freeholders and Electors of Great Britain on the clamour against a Bill to permit persons to apply for Naturalisation, professing the Jewish Religion*, 1753. The measure was compared to the attempt of Julian to rebuild the Temple of Jerusalem, &c.

party was being formed, ready to adopt the cry when occasion required. That occasion arrived about 1790. For nearly half a century the Dissenters had patiently submitted to the disabilities to which they were subjected. But in 1787 the time seemed to have arrived when they might fairly hope for some relief. Eight years previously they had succeeded in gaining some alleviation of their grievances.[1] And the next attempt seemed likely to succeed. The bill for the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts was lost indeed by a majority of 78; but the comparative emptiness of the House showed that the feeling against the repeal was not so strong as it had been some years back. In 1789, the bill was again proposed in a still emptier House, and the majority was reduced to 20.

But a violent reaction was at hand. The French Revolution at its outset met with much sympathy from generous spirits in England. But as it ran on in its wild course, alarm filled men's minds and made them rally more enthusiastically than ever round 'the Altar and the Throne.' The old bitter feeling against Dissenters, which was fast dying out, revived with tenfold force. They were branded with the name of Republicans, and their cause was identified with that of the Revolutionists over the water. Any measure which tended to put more power into their hands was regarded with jealousy and alarm. All further attempts to obtain the repeal of the Test Act, even when aided by the eloquence of Charles James Fox, were, in the present state of anti-revolutionary feeling, utterly vain. But there were still many sympathisers with the French in England; and a not very judicious attempt to celebrate the anniversary of the Revolution caused an explosion of the fury of the mob,—almost equal to that of the Gordon riots a few years earlier. Birmingham was the scene of the storm. In that town and neighbourhood, there were explosive elements on both sides. On the one hand, it was the residence of Dr. Priestley, who was an enthusiastic ad-

[1] A declaration was substituted by Act of Parliament (19 George III. cap. 44) for their previous subscription to the Articles required from Dissenters, as the condition of exercising the office of minister or preacher, in which they asserted their personal Christianity and Protestantism and belief in Scripture. See Skeat's *History of the Free Churches in England*, p. 465.

mirer of the French Revolution, and who, as being a sort of Metropolitan of the Unitarians, drew after him a considerable following; on the other hand, ever since the days of Sacheverell, with whom 'Warwickshire had been a favourite district,' there had always been a strong High Church party in that part. As might be expected, Priestley and the Birmingham clergy had never been on very good terms; and the relations between them were of course not improved when this new bone of contention, the French Revolution, became a matter of discussion. Affairs came to a climax on July 14, 1791. The mob shouted 'Church and King,' 'Down with the Presbyterians,' 'Confusion to Priestley,' destroyed meeting-houses, and the residences of the principal Unitarians, and gave notice that every house that had not 'Church and King' written upon it would be destroyed on the next day. Priestley, of course, was a principal sufferer; not only his house and the place of worship where he ministered, but his laboratory and valuable library and manuscripts, perished. It is needless to describe at length the sad scenes, which resembled those of all popular riots. Priestley owned that the clergy had no concern in the riot, but he charged them with having contributed to raise the spirit which produced it, and the feeling that this was so embittered the animus which existed on both sides. Dr. Parr, who appears to have been sincerely anxious to promote peace, wrote to the Dissenters: 'Those whom you suppose, whether justly or unjustly, to be your enemies have instituted a society under the appellation of the "Church and King" club. I hope not one member of the club can seriously wish to see your persons again in danger or your houses in flames. But you know the cry of "Church and King" has been lately[1] heard in broken and indistinct murmurs, and if you meet again to commemorate the French Revolution, that cry will again thunder in your ears, when the storm of public indignation is collected to one point.' 'I meddle not,' adds the doctor, 'with the controversy going on between Dr. Priestley and the clergy of your town, so far as it relates to circumstances which preceded or those which followed the riots. But those

[1] Written in May 1792.

clergymen have professed unanimously to lament the misfortune which befell you. They have condemned the savage and tumultuous proceedings of a misguided rabble. To some of them you are indebted for well-intended exertions in the hour of distress, and against none have you brought any accusations for encouraging the popular fury at that juncture when the act of encouraging it would have been most disgraceful to them but most injurious to yourselves.'[1] Mr. Hutton also, one of the sufferers, gives a full, and apparently a fair account of the riots in his autobiography.[2]

The 'Church and King' cry, like other Church cries of the eighteenth century, found its most popular expression in poetry. Poor Dr. Priestley was, of course, the chief hero of these effusions. His misdeeds were stigmatised in verses which were evidently intended to be incorporated with or substituted for 'God save the King' and 'Rule Britannia.' The following is clearly meant to find its place in the National Anthem. The expression 'Gunpowder Priestley,' in the first verse, refers to an absurd report that Priestley had conveyed gunpowder into one of the Birmingham churches, and had contrived that it should explode during divine service; and also, that two barrels of gunpowder had been found in his house.[3] The report was about as credible as that which even so respectable a newspaper as 'The Times' circulated, viz., that at the famous dinner Priestley proposed the toasts, 'No Church, no King,' and 'The King's head upon a charger,' the fact being that Priestley was not present at the dinner at all.

OLD MOTHER CHURCH.

Sedition is their creed,
Feign'd sheep, but wolves indeed,
  How can we trust?
Gunpowder Priestly would
Deluge the throne in blood,
And lay the great and good
  Low in the dust.

[1] *Tracts by Warburton and a Warburtonian* (Dr. Parr).
[2] See the *Life of Hutton*, by Himself (1723–1813), published 1816.
[3] See *An Appeal to the Public on the Riots in Birmingham*, by J. Priestley, 1791.

Hist'ry thy page unfold :
Did not their sires of old
Murder their king?
And they would overthrow
King, Lords, and Bishops too,
And while they gave the blow
Loyally sing,
O Lord our God arise, &c.

Another ballad on the French Revolution, entitled 'A New Song on the Times,' ends thus :

Then stand by the Church and the King and the laws,
The old Lion still hath his teeth and his claws,
We know of no despots, we've nothing to fear,
For their new-fangled nonsense will never do here.
Derry Down.[1]

Priestley, however, and the Revolution party, met with a far more formidable antagonist than all the balladmongers, the Birmingham clergy, and the Birmingham mob put together. Priestley was unfortunate in many ways. However much one may disagree with some of his views, it must be owned that he was a thoroughly sincere, conscientious, and unselfish man. He was also an able man—in his own particular line, a *very* able man ; and he certainly did not deserve the rough usage he met with, not only at Birmingham but in London and elsewhere, in consequence of the 'Church and King' cry being raised against him. But perhaps his greatest misfortune was, that it seemed to be his lot in controversy to play the part of the

Infelix puer atque impar congressus Achilli,

In questions of theology and scholarship he was no match for his antagonist, Bishop Horsley; in politico-ecclesiastical disputes, he was utterly unfit to cope with the greatest genius of the century, Edmund Burke, with whom he rashly ventured to measure swords. The uncompromising champion of the American colonists, the eloquent defender of the oppressed Hindoos, the oppressed Irish, the oppressed Ro-

[1] This, and many other ballads on the Church and King cry and the French Revolution, may be found in the excellent collection of pamphlets in the British Museum.

manists and the oppressed Nonconformists, might have been expected to sympathise with the oppressed French; and Burke has been frequently charged with inconsistency for not so doing. But, in point of fact, the cases were not analogous. A generous sympathy with the oppressed was always congenial to Burke's noble nature. But there was another feeling which was hardly less strong in him—a profound reverence for our constitution both in Church and State. He was of opinion that the American Colonists, the Hindoos, the Irish, the Nonconformists, and the Roman Catholics might all be relieved without compromising any of the principles of the British Constitution.[1] But the principles of the French Revolutionists and of their English sympathisers he held to be absolutely irreconcilable with English constitutional government.[2] Whether he was right or wrong in so thinking, need not here be discussed. It is sufficient to say that the 'Church and King' party found a powerful, and, probably, unexpected ally in this great and good man.

In one sense, however, he was no new ally. Some of his earliest public utterances show how powerful a hold the English Church had upon him. His sentiments on Christianity in general, and Anglicanism in particular, were in reality far nobler and ampler than the Whig theology of his day. One of his biographers calls him, oddly enough, 'a Puseyite.'[3]

[1] Thus, e.g. in speaking on a bill for the relief of Dissenters in 1773, he said: 'I wish to see the established Church of England great and powerful; I wish to see her foundations laid low and deep, that she may crush the giant powers of rebellious darkness; I would have her head raised up to that Heaven to which she conducts us. I would have her open wide her hospitable gates by a noble and liberal comprehension, but I would have no breach in her wall.'

[2] In a letter to the Duke of Bedford, after having drawn in the darkest colours a picture of the French revolutionary system, he adds, 'Such are *their* ideas, such *their* religion, and such *their* law. But as to *our* country, and *our* race, as long as the well-compacted structure of our Church and State, the sanctuary, the Holy of Holies of that ancient law defended by power, a fortress at once and a temple, shall stand inviolate on the brow of the British Lion,' &c. &c. In his speech on the impeachment of Hastings, 1788: 'My Lords, you have here the lights of our religion, you have the Bishops of England; you have that true image of the Primitive Church in its ancient force, in its ancient ordinances, purified from the superstitions and vices which a long succession of ages will bring upon the best institutions.'

[3] *Public and Domestic Life of the Rt. Hon. E. Burke*, by Peter Burke. Burke had more in common with the High Church notions of previous times and

It is difficult to say how far he would have sympathised with the Oxford movement, if he had lived fifty years later; or how far he would have sympathised with Churchmen of the Ken and Nelson type, if he had lived fifty years earlier. But it is evident that he was perfectly satisfied with the Church of his own day; and when it seemed to him to be imperilled, he joined heart and soul in the 'Church and King' cry.

It is difficult to exaggerate the importance of such an ally. The eighteenth century did not reach a high level on the average; but, as a thoughtful writer has remarked, 'more than any which preceded it, this century was one in which the leaders amongst men stood even more than usually prominent amongst their fellows.'[1] It was an age of many pigmies and a few giants; and among the giants, none reached the stature of Edmund Burke. His very faults were so near akin to virtues, that they may be almost said to have added to his greatness. If he was too sensitive, it was because his moral sensibilities were exceptionally acute; if he was sometimes swept away by passion instead of being guided by calm reason, it was because he was so intensely in earnest. His speeches were so thoughtful, that they were like spoken essays; his essays were so eloquent, that they were like written speeches. In some respects there is a sort of superficial resemblance between Burke and Bolingbroke; but it is only superficial. Both dazzled their contemporaries by their brilliancy. Both adopted a gorgeousness of style and a grandiloquence of language which would, perhaps, have

the Puseyite doctrines of subsequent, than with the sober Whig theology of his own day' (p. 50). The same writer accounts for much of his bitterness against the Revolution by his intimacy with Tom Paine: 'Paine unwittingly sickened Burke of the French Revolution. He tried to show him how grand, but, as Burke viewed it, substantially destructive a system might be expected from the new French order of things.' Whatever view we may take of Burke's conduct, surely Mr. Buckle's theory, that it was owing to the 'decay of a mighty mind' (*History of Civilisation*, &c. vol. i., p. 426-7), is utterly untenable. Let any one read Burke's *Reflections on the French Revolution*, and his subsequent works on the subject; and whatever he may think of the sentiments, he must admit that in point of intellectual ability they are equal to the best of Burke's earlier writings. At the same time, it is admitted that Burke was outrageously violent and unreasonable in his indiscriminate and sweeping diatribes against everything connected with the Revolution.

[1] *Quarterly Review*, No. 286, April 1877

seemed like affectation in lesser men;[1] and, what is more to the present purpose, both stood forth as champions of the Church when it was thought to be in peril. But penetrate beneath the surface, and what a difference there is between the two men! There was always something of the sham about Bolingbroke. His best writings have a falsetto tone in them. He was what a modern writer would term 'a simulacrum and fanfarronade.' But Burke was a real man, if ever there was one; sincere and open as the daylight; thoroughly earnest in everything he took in hand; a defender of the Church, not because, like Bolingbroke, he thought it a useful political institution, but because he had an intense belief in its spiritual functions, because it was the outward embodiment and best defence of the religion which he loved from his very heart.

The 'Church and King' party might well be proud of such an ally. Other great men, whom perhaps they could hardly have expected, cast in their lot with them. The younger Pitt sided with them, and was called by the opposite party 'a son of the great Earl of Chatham, the issue of his loins, but not the child of his principles!'[2] Wilberforce took the same side, saying, 'It was now a question of established Church or no established Church.'[3] But Burke was the greatest champion of all. He more than counterbalanced the formidable opposition of Fox. But his advocacy was not needed for long. Before the century closed, the greatest alarmists must have been convinced that both Church and King were safe: whether either the one or the other was ever really in danger, is a question which may very well be left open to dispute.

J. H. O.

[1] One can easily understand that when Burke 'adopted Bolingbroke's style and carried on a course of ironical argument, so as to show that the system of reasoning used by Bolingbroke against religion might be urged against any institution, human or divine,' the irony was mistaken. This work, however (*The Vindication of Natural Society*) was written in Burke's earlier days, 1754. His more matured style was very superior to that of Bolingbroke.

[2] *High Church Politics, Appeal against, as exemplified in the opposition to the Repeal of the Test Laws, and the Riots in Birmingham*, 1792.

[3] See Skeat's *History of the Free Churches, ad finem.*

CHAPTER V.

CHURCH FABRICS AND CHURCH SERVICES.

THE Georgian era, which began in the second decade of the last century, lasted for thirty years of the present one. In a country where thought is free, and government constitutional, it is impossible that the personal character of the sovereign should have more than a limited influence. With the Revolution of 1688 that influence had already ceased to be a great power in the State. It must be by a kind of accident that the Georgian age was on the whole so homogeneous and definite a period. But this it certainly was, to a great extent, in its social and political aspects, and still more so in the character of its Church history. A hundred years and more did not pass by without stir of thought, without change, nor (it may be added) without improvement. Two great events in the history of religious thought in England happened during its course—the rise and development, in and outside the Church, of the Evangelical revival, and the action and reaction of the great upheaval on the continent. If the Church was torpid, it was at all events not so dead as to remain unaffected by movements vastly different in kind, but each, in their several directions, of great importance. In fact, the process of growth was all the time at work; and in ecclesiastical, as in civil matters, the past has glided into the present without any breach of continuity, or any abrupt transitions. Close comparison of the sentiments and tone of thought which prevailed in the Church of England in the beginning and end of the Georgian age would no doubt show that the sameness was more superficial than might at first appear. There is sure to be some fallacy in marking out a number of years under some specific name, and treating it as if it had, in a manner, a separate existence of its own. Still, an ordinary observer would notice very little alteration in Church matters during

that period, particularly in all those outward circumstances which most catch the eye. The Church of Queen Anne's time had in many respects a marked character of its own. There was more life, more variety, more excitement in it; and its traditions and unwritten usages bore evident traces, which afterwards became much less distinct, of a past which even in popular memory was by no means forgotten. The strong feelings excited by the Revolution, the studied projects of Comprehension, the alarms excited by Rome in the time of James II., the rule of Puritanism, the controversies of the Reformation, and lingering vestiges of a yet earlier state of feeling,—all left in their several degrees a visible stamp upon the Church history of the earlier years of the eighteenth century. So also, at the end of the period, almost simultaneously with William IV.'s accession, a new change became perceptible. The political activity which set in about the time of the Reform Bill soon had its counterpart in the renewed life and energies which began to assert themselves among men of all parties throughout the National Church. Before the last century closed, it had shown signs in more than one of its leading sections, that it was shaking off the unbecoming slumbers into which it had fallen in Walpole's time. But thirty years or more of the present century had passed before the Church awoke to put its material house in order, to improve and beautify its churches, and to improve the character of its services. Church buildings and Church services, as they are remembered by men yet of middle age, were very much the same at the close of the Georgian period as they were at its beginning. Much, therefore, of the present chapter will exhibit a state of things in many respects perfectly familiar to men who are still in the prime of life. Our great-great-grandfathers would have felt quite at home in many of the churches which we remember in our childhood. They would find now a great deal that was strange to them. Though Prayer-book and Rubrics remain the same, Church spirit in our day does not own very much in common with that which most generally prevailed during the reigns of the four Georges. With the uncontested accession of the first of these kings, a calm set in—too often a sluggish and unhealthy calm. The hopes and fears which had disquieted the previous gene-

ration had gradually died away, and an age of mediocrity succeeded, which was far indeed from being golden.

In a Church like this of England, where so much liberty of thought and diversity of opinion has ever been freely conceded to bishops and clergy as well as to its lay members, there has never failed to be, to some extent at least, a corresponding variety in the outward surroundings of public worship. From the beginning of the Reformation to the present day, the three principal varieties of Church opinion known in modern phraseology as 'High,' 'Low,' and 'Broad' Church have never ceased to co-exist within its borders. One or other of the three parties has at times been very depressed, while another has been popular and predominant. But there has never been any external cause to prevent the revival of the one, or to make impossible that the other should not, with changing circumstances, lose its temporary supremacy. In the eighteenth century there were, from beginning to end, men of each of these three sections. The old Puritanism was almost obsolete; but there were always Low Churchmen, not only in the earlier, but in the modern sense of the word. High Churchmen, in the seventeenth-century and Laudean meaning, were no doubt few and far between by the time the century had run through half its course. But they were not wholly confined to the Nonjuring 'remnant,' and High Churchmen of a less pronounced type never ceased to abound. Broad Churchmen, of various shades of opinion, were always numerous. Only each and every party in the Church was weakened and diluted in force and purpose by a widespread deficiency in warmth of feeling and earnestness of conviction. Hot party feeling is no doubt a mischief; but exemption from it is dearly bought by the levelling influences of indifference, or of the lukewarmness which approaches to it. The Church of the eighteenth century, and of the Georgian period in general, was by no means deficient in estimable clergymen who lived and died amid the well-earned respect of parishioners and neighbours. But the tendencies of the time were in favour of a decent, unexacting orthodoxy, neither too High, nor too Broad, nor too Low, nor too strict. It may be well imagined that this feeling among the clergy should also find outward expression in the general

character of the churches where they ministered, and of the services in which they officiated. A traveller interested in modes of worship might have passed through county after county, from one parish church to another, and would have found, as compared with the present time, a singular lack of variety. No doubt he would see carelessness and neglect contrasting in too many places with a more comely order in others. He would very rarely notice any disposition to develop ritual, to vary forms, and to make use of whatever elasticity the laws of the Church would permit, in order to make the externals of worship a more forcible expression of one or another school of thought.

Our forefathers in the eighteenth century were almost always content to maintain in tolerable, or scarcely tolerable repair, at the lowest modicum of expense, the existing fabrics of their churches. It has been truly remarked, that 'to this apathy we are much indebted; for, after all, they took care that the buildings should not fall to the ground; if they had done more, they would probably have done worse.'[1] For ecclesiastical architecture was then, as is well known, at its lowest ebb. 'Public taste,' wrote Warburton to Hurd in 1749, 'is the most wretched imaginable.'[2] He was speaking, at the time, of poetry. But poetry and art are closely connected; and it is next to impossible that depth of feeling and grandeur of conception should be found in the one, at a date when there is a marked deficiency of them in the other. There were, however, special reasons for the decline of church architecture. It had become, for very want of exercise, an almost forgotten art. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the work of building churches had been prosecuted with lavish munificence; so much so, that the Reformed Church succeeded to an inheritance more than doubly sufficient for its immediate wants.[3] A period, therefore, of great activity in this respect was followed by one of nearly total cessation. 'In England no church was erected of the smallest pretensions to architectural design between the Reformation and the great fire of London in 1666, with the solitary exception of the small

[1] Review of Milner's *Church Arch.*, in *Q. Rev.* vol. vi. 63.

[2] Warburton and Hurd's *Correspondence*, 3.

[3] James Fergusson's *History of the Modern Styles of Architecture*, 246.

church in Covent Garden, erected by Inigo Jones in 1631.'[1] 'During the eighty years that elapsed from the death of Henry VIII. to the accession of Charles I., the transition style left its marks in every corner of England in the mansions of the nobility and gentry, and in the colleges and schools which were created out of the confiscated funds of the monasteries; but, unfortunately for the dignity of this style, not one church, nor one really important public building or regal palace, was erected during the period which might have tended to redeem it from the utilitarianism into which it was sinking. The great characteristic of this epoch was, that during its continuance architecture ceased to be a natural mode of expression, or the occupation of cultivated intellects, and passed into the state of being merely the stock in trade of certain professional experts. Whenever this is so, *Addio Maraviglia!*'[2] The reign of Puritanism was of course wholly unfavourable to the art; the period of laxity that followed was no less so. Even Wren, of whose comprehensive genius Englishmen have every reason to speak with pride, formed, in the first instance, a most inadequate conception of what a Christian Church should be. 'The very theory of the ground plan for a church had died out, when he constructed his first miserable design for a huge meeting-house.'[3]

Before the eighteenth century, Gothic architecture had already fallen into utter disrepute. Sir Henry Wotton, fresh from his embassies in Venice, had declared that such was the 'natural imbecility' of pointed arches, and such 'their very uncomeliness,' that they ought to be 'banished from judicious eyes, among the reliques of a barbarous age.'[4] Evelyn, lamenting the demolition by Goths and Vandals of the stately monuments of Greek and Roman architecture, spoke of the mediæval buildings which had risen in their stead, as if they had no merits to redeem them from contempt—'congestions of heavy, dark, melancholy and monkish piles, without any proportion, use, or beauty,'[5] deplorable instances of pains and cost lavishly expended, and resulting only in

[1] James Fergusson's *History of the Modern Styles of Architecture*, 246.
[2] Id. 255.
[3] M. E. C. Walcot, *Traditions, &c. of Cathedrals*, 47.
[4] Quoted in *Qu. Rev.* vol. vi. 62.
[5] Id. vol. lxix. iii.

distraction and confusion. Sir Christopher Wren said of the great cathedrals of the middle ages, that they were 'vast and gigantic buildings indeed, but not worthy the name of architecture.'[1] Even at such times there were some who were proof against the caprice of fashionable taste, and who were not insensible to the solemn grandeur of 'high embowed roofs,' 'massy pillars,' and 'storied windows.'[2] Lord Lyttelton censured the old architecture as 'loaded with a multiplicity of idle and useless parts,' yet granted that 'upon the whole it has a mighty awful air, and strikes you with reverence.'[3] Henry VII.'s Chapel at Westminster was still regarded with admiration as 'that wonder of the world;'[4] and although people did not quite know what to do with their cathedrals, and regarded them rather as curiosities, alien to the times, and heirlooms from a dead past, they did not cease to speak of them with some pride. But popular taste—so far as architectural taste can be spoken of as prevalent in any definite form throughout the greater part of the last century—was all in favour of a 'Palladian' or 'Greek' style. It was a style scarcely adapted to our climate, and unfavourable to the symbolism of Christian thought, yet capable, in the hands of a master, of being very grand and imposing. Under weaker treatment the effect was grievous. There was neither manliness nor solemnity in the usual run of churches built after the similitude of 'Roman theatres and Grecian fanes.'[5] Maypoles instead of columns, capitals of no order, and pie-crust decorations—such, exclaimed Seward,[6] were the too frequent adjuncts of the newly built churches he saw about him. At the time, however, that Seward wrote, a change had already begun to show itself in many influential quarters. Even the 'correct classicality' of Sir William Chambers,[7] the leading architect of the day, met, towards the close of the century, with by no means the same unquestioning admiration which he had received at an earlier date. There was division

[1] *Parentalia*, p. 305. *Qu. Rev.* vol. ii. 133.
[2] *Il Penseroso.* [3] *Persian Letters*, No. xxvi.
[4] Paterson's *Pietas Londinensis*, 1714, 236.
[5] Cawthorne's Poems,—Anderson's *English Poets*, x. 425.
[6] Seward's *Anecdotes*, 1798, ii. 312.
[7] J. Fergusson's *Mod. Archit.* 282.

of opinion on fundamental questions of architectural fitness; and persons could applaud the talents of mediæval builders without being considered eccentric. Gray, Mason, Wharton, Bishop Percy, and many others, had contributed in various ways to create in England a reaction, still more widely felt in Germany, in favour of ideas which for some time past had been contemptuously relegated to the darkness of the Middle Ages. A frequent, though as yet not very discriminating approval of Gothic[1] architecture was part of the movement. 'High veneration,' remarked Dr. Sayers, writing about the last year of the century, 'has lately been revived for the pointed style.'[2] It was one among many other outward signs of a change gradually coming over the public mind on matters concerned with the observance of religion.

An enthusiastic antiquarian and ecclesiologist, whose contributions to the 'Gentleman's Magazine' of 1799 were of great service in calling attention to the reckless mischief which was often worked, under the name of improvements, in our noblest churches and cathedrals, has transmitted to us a sad list of mutilations and disfigurements which had come under his observation. He has told how 'in every corner of the land some unseemly disguise, in the Roman or Grecian taste, was thrown over the most lovely forms of the ancient architecture.'[3] His indignation was especially moved by the havoc perpetrated in Westminster Abbey, sometimes by set design of tasteless innovators, often by 'some low-hovelled cutter of monumental memorials,' or by workmen at coronations, 'who, we are told, cannot attend to trifles.'[4] Carter's lamentation is more than justified by the present Dean, who has enumerated in detail many of the vandalisms committed during the last age in the minster under his care. What else could be expected, when it was held by those who were thought the best judges in such matters, that nothing could be more barbarous and devoid of interest than the Confessor's Chapel, and 'nothing more stupid than laying statues on their backs?' It might have been supposed that Dean Atterbury,

[1] Its advocates were very desirous, about this time, of substituting the term 'English' for 'Gothic.'—Sayers, ii. 440. *Qu. Rev.* ii. 133, iv. 476.

[2] Sayers' 'Architect. Antiquities.'—*Life and Works*, ii. 476.

[3] *Gentleman's Mag.* 1799, 858. [4] Id. 667-70, 733-6, 858-61.

at all events, would have had some sympathy with the workmanship of the past. But 'there is a charming tradition that he stood by, complacently watching the workmen as they hewed smooth the fine old sculptures over Solomon's porch, which the nineteenth century vainly seeks to recall to their places.'[1] For a list of some of the disastrous alterations and demolitions inflicted upon other cathedrals, the reader may be referred to the pages of Mr. Mackenzie Walcot.[2] Wreck and ruin seems especially to have followed in the track of Wyatt, who was looked upon, nevertheless, as a principal reviver of the ancient style of architecture. If cathedrals, where it might be imagined that some remains of ecclesiastical taste would chiefly linger, thus suffered, even when under the supervision of the chief architects of the period, what would have happened if, at such a time, a sudden zeal for Church restoration had invaded the country clergy?

We may be thankful, on the whole, that it was an age of whitewash. Carter, writing of Westminster Abbey, records one thing with hearty gratitude. It had not been whitewashed. It was the one religious structure in the kingdom which showed its original finishing, and 'those modest hues which the native appearance of the stone so pleasantly bestows.'[3] Everywhere else the dauber's brush had been at work. He spoke of it with indignation. 'I make little scruple in declaring that this job work, which is carried on in every part of the kingdom, is a mean makeshift to give a delusive appearance of repair and cleanliness to the walls, when in general this wash is resorted to to hide neglected or perpetrated fractures.'[4] The stone fretwork of the Lady Chapel at Hereford,[5] the valuable wall-paintings at Salisbury,[6] the carved work of Grinley Gibbons at St. James', Westminster,[7] shared, for example, the general fate, and were smothered in lime. Horace Walpole, laughing at the City of London for employing one whom he thought a very indifferent craftsman to write their history, said he supposed that presently, instead of having books published with the

[1] A. P. Stanley's *Hist. Memorials of Westminster Abbey*, 540-2.
[2] M. E. C. Walcot, *Traditions and Customs of Cathedrals*, 47-55.
[3] *Gentleman's Mag.* 1799, 669.
[4] Id. [5] Walcott, 52. [6] Id. 51.
[7] *London Parishes*, &c. 146.

imprimatur of an university, they would be 'printed as churches are whitewashed—John Smith and Thomas Johnson, Churchwardens.'[1] How few churches are there that were not earlier or later in the last century emblazoned with some such like scroll! But if whitewash conceals, it also preserves; it hides beauties to which one generation is blind, that it may disclose them the more fresh and uninjured to another which has learnt to appreciate them.

When it is said that the churches were kept in such tolerable repair that at all events they did not fall, it would appear that in many cases little more than this could be truthfully added. Ely Minster remains standing, but more by good chance, if Defoe is to be trusted, than from any sufficient care on the part of its guardians. 'Some of it totters,' he wrote, 'so much with every gale of wind, looks so like decay, and seems so near it, that whenever it does fall, all that 'tis likely will be thought strange in it will be that it did not fall a hundred years sooner.'[2] Such an instance might well be exceptional, and no doubt was so among cathedrals;[3] but a great number of parish churches had fallen, by the middle of the century, into a deplorable state. Secker, in a charge delivered in 1750, gives a grievous picture of what was to be seen in many country churches. 'Some, I fear, have scarce been kept in necessary present repair, and others by no means duly cleared from annoyances, which must gradually bring them to decay: water undermining and rotting the foundations, earth heaped up against the outside, weeds and shrubs growing upon them . . . . too frequently the floors are meanly paved, or the walls dirty or patched, or the windows ill glazed, and it may be in part stopped up . . . . or they are damp, offensive, and unwholesome. Why (he adds) should not the Church of God, as well as everything else, partake of the improvements of later times?'[4] Bishop Butler delivered a Charge the next year to the Durham clergy,

[1] H. Walpole's *Letters*, i. 360.

[2] Defoe's *Tour through the whole Island*, i. 85.

[3] Many of them, however, could not yet have recovered from the treatment they had endured in the time of the Commonwealth. Though the Parliamentary committee appointed to decide the question had happily decided against the demolition of cathedrals, they were allowed to fall into a miserable state of dilapidation and decay.

[4] Secker's *Eight Charges*, 151–4.

and contrasted, exactly as Secker had done, the extreme difficulty of inducing people to give money for the decent repair of churches, with the opulence and extravagance which was common enough in other matters. Bishop Fleetwood, he said, had observed forty years before,[1] that unless the good public spirit of repairing churches should prevail a great deal more, a hundred years would bring to the ground a huge number of our churches. 'And no one, I believe, will imagine that the good spirit he has recommended prevails more at present than it did then.'[2] As for cleanliness, Bishop Horne remarked that in England, as in the sister kingdom, it was evidently a frequent maxim that cleanliness was no essential to devotion. People seemed very commonly to be of the same opinion with the Scotch minister, whose wife made answer to a visitor's request—'The pew swept and lined! My husband would think it downright popery!'[3] One can understand, without needing to sympathise with it, the strong Protestantism of Hervey's admiration for a church 'magnificently plain;'[4] but in the eighteenth century, the excessive plainness, not to say the frequent dirtiness, of so many churches was certainly owing to other causes than that of ultra-Protestantism.

After speaking of the disrepair and squalor which, although far indeed from being universal, were too frequently noticeable in the churches of the last age, it might seem a natural transition to pass on to the singularly incongruous uses to which the naves of some of our principal ecclesiastical buildings were in a few instances perverted. In the minds of modern Churchmen there would be the closest connection between culpable neglect of the sacred fabric, and the profanation of it by admission within its walls of the sights and sounds of common daily business or pleasure. There was something of this in the period under review. The extraordinary desecrations once general in St. Paul's belong indeed chiefly to the latter half of the 16th and the first half of the 17th centuries. Most readers are more or less familiar with the accounts given of 'Paul's Walk' in the old days,—how

[1] In his *Charge to the Clergy of St. Asaph*, 1710.

[2] Bishop Butler's *Primary Charge*, 1751.

[3] Horne's 'Thoughts on Various Subjects'—*Works*, i. 286.

[4] J. Hervey, 'Medit. among the Tombs'—*Works*, i. 1.

it was not only 'the recognised resort of wits and gallants, and men of fashion and of lawyers,'[1] but also, as Evelyn called it, 'a stable of horses and a den of thieves'[2]—a common market, where Shakspeare makes Falstaff buy a horse as he would at Smithfield[3]—usurers in the south aisle, horse-dealers in the north, and in the midst 'all kinds of bargains, meetings, and brawlings.'[4] Before the eighteenth century began, 'Paul's Walk' was, in all its main features, a thing of the past. Yet a good deal more than the mere tradition of it remained. In a pamphlet published in 1703, 'Jest' asks 'Earnest' whether he has been at St. Paul's, and seen the flux of people there. 'And what should I do there,' says the latter, 'where men go out of curiosity and interest, and not for the sake of religion? Your shopkeepers assemble there as at full 'Change, and the buyers and sellers are far from being cast out of the Temple.'[5] At Durham there was a regular thoroughfare across the nave until 1750, and at Norwich until 1748, when Bishop Gooch stopped it. The naves of York and Durham Cathedral were fashionable promenades.[6] The Confessor's Chapel made, on occasion, a convenient play-ground for Westminster scholars, who were allowed, as late as 1829, to keep the scenes for their annual play in the triforium of the north transept.[7]

But 'Paul's Walk' and all customs in any way akin to it, so far as they survived into the last century, had in reality little or nothing to do with the irreligion and neglect of which the century has been sorely, and not causelessly accused. Rather, they were the relics of customs which had not very long fallen into desuetude. The time had been, and was not so very long past, when the stalls and bazaars of St. Paul's Cathedral did but illustrate on a large scale what might be seen on certain days in almost all the churches of the kingdom. Our forefathers in the middle ages[8] drew a

[1] W. Longman's *History of St. Paul's*, chap. 4. See especially the account quoted there from Earle's *Microcosmography*, 1628.

[2] Quoted in Id. [3] *Hen. IV.* part ii. act i. sc. 2.

[4] Pilkington, quoted in Walcot's *Cathedrals*, 82.

[5] 'Heraclitus Ridens,' quoted in J. Malcolm's *Manners, &c. of London*, i. 233. [6] Walcot, 81.

[7] A. P. Stanley's *Hist. Memorials of Westminster*, 535.

[8] Authorities for all the statements in this paragraph may be found in J. C. Jeaffreson's *Book about Clergy*, part iv. chaps. 1–2, vol. i. 336 to end.

broad line of distinction between the chancel and the nave. The former was looked upon as sanctified exclusively to religious uses; the latter was regarded rather as a consecrated house under the care and protection of the Church. There had been times when the fugitive or wayfarer might find refuge, rest, and refreshment there. The merchant and the householder found safe guardianship within its walls for their bales of wool or boxes of treasure. Schools of instruction were held within its precincts.[1] So also were Courts of Justice, not only ecclesiastical consistories, but justices' sessions. Funeral banquets,[2] churchwardens' feasts, and 'Church ales' were celebrated there. And when the annual wake came round,—the festival of dedication,—the religious rites proper to the day, and the mixed mirth and business which were its secular concomitants, found in the hallowed building an equal shelter.[3] The fair was commonly held in the churchyard; but in doubtful weather overflowed without fear or reproach into the church itself; and purely secular amusements, as well as mystery plays and sacred tragedies, might be witnessed, on such occasions, under its roof. Many grave Churchmen of unquestioned piety entirely approved of these practices upon the whole, however much they might except to particular instances. It was all part of a theory which undoubtedly contained much truth, and which the Church of the middle ages systematically carried out, to the great increase of its influence and popularity. The principle was, that the Christian Church is bound to take a regulative and sympathetic interest in all that interests society and is in itself blameless; that the Church is the mother of the people, and God's house their home; and that what it did not anathematise, it might favour, elevate, and control. There was, however, no age in which the palpable objections to this

[1] It may be noticed here that at Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1746, the Chapel, after Saturday evening prayers, was the scene of the public Latin declamations.—*Memoirs of R. Cumberland*, i. 97.

[2] Thus Margaret Atkinson, in her will Oct. 18, 1544, directs two dozens of bread, a kilderkin of ale, two gammon of bacon, three shoulders of mutton, and two couple of rabbits, to be set out on a table in the midst of the church, and all the parish, rich and poor, to be invited to it.—Strype in *Jeaffreson*, i. 354 (note).

[3] A canon of 1571 forbade churchwardens holding banquets and public entertainments in churches; but Stubbs shows that in 1585 Church ales, &c. were still not unfrequently held there.

lending of church buildings to secular purposes were not to many minds much more evident than any gain that could result from it. Many laws and canons were passed at different times against the desecration of churches. The English before the Conquest were more scrupulous than the Normans of a later date. That feeling regained strength about the time of the Wycliffite revival. In 1444 Archbishop Stafford decreed throughout his province, that except in time of harvest, no fairs or markets should be held on Sundays or other holy days either in churches or churchyards.[1] With the Reformation, objectors increased in number and gained strength. But in spite of the 88th Canon, which specially forbids plays, feasts, temporal courts, leets, and musters, &c., being held in churches, the old usages lingered on till Puritan times both in the metropolitan cathedral, and not unfrequently in remote parish churches. It sounds somewhat like a paradox, to assert that the exclusion from churches of all that is not distinctly connected with the service of religion was mainly due to the Puritans, of whose wanton irreverence in sacred buildings we hear so much. Yet this seems certainly to have been the case. Traces of the older usage lingered on, as we have seen, into the middle of the last century; but from the time of the Commonwealth they had already become exceptional anachronisms.

To return to the general condition and appearance of eighteenth-century churches. Before the period commenced pews had become everywhere general. In mediæval times there had been, properly speaking, none. A few distinguished people were permitted, as a special privilege, to have their private closets furnished, very much like the grand pews of later days, with cushions, carpets, and curtains. But, as an almost universal rule, the nave was unencumbered with any permanent seats, and only provided with a few portable stools for the aged and infirm. Pews began to be introduced in Henry VIII.'s time, notwithstanding the protests of Sir Thomas More and others. Under Elizabeth they became more frequent in town churches. In Charles I.'s time, they had so far gained ground as to be often a source of hot and even riotous contention between those who opposed them

[1] 'Ut nundinæ ac emporia in ecclesiis aut cœmiteriis, diebusque Dominicis atque festis, præterquam tempore messis, non teneantur.'—*Jeaffreson*, i. 346.

and others who insisted on erecting them.[1] Even in Charles II.'s reign they were exceptional rather than otherwise, and the term had not yet become limited to boxes in church. Pepys writes in his 'Diary' on February 18, 1668, 'At Church; there was my Lady Brouncker and Mrs. Williams in our pew.' On the 25th of the same month, we find the entry, 'At the play; my wife sat in my Lady Fox's pew with her.'[2] Sir Christopher Wren was not at all pleased to see them introduced into his London churches.[3] During the luxurious, self-indulgent times that followed the Restoration, private pews of all sorts and shapes gained a general footing. Before Queen Anne's reign was over they had become so regular a part of the ordinary furniture of a church, that in the regulations approved in 1712 by both Houses of Convocation for the consecrating of churches and chapels, it is specially enjoined that the church be previously pewed.[4] Twelve years, however, later than this they were evidently by no means universal in country places. In 1725, Swift, enumerating 'the plagues of a Country Life,' makes 'a church without pews' a special item in his list.[5] But 'paved, pewed, and wainscoted,' had been for many years past the characteristic formula which recorded the church restorations of the period.[6] There are plenty of allusions in the writings of contemporary poets and essayists to the cozy sleep-provoking structures in which people of fashion and well-to-do citizens could enjoy without attracting too much notice—

> the Sunday due
> Of slumbering in an upper pew.[7]

In Swift's humorous metamorphosis,—

> A bedstead of the antique mode,
> Compact of timber many a load,
> Such as our ancestors did use,
> Was metamorphos'd into pews;

[1] Jeaffreson, ii. 14. [2] Pepys' *Diary*, vol. v. 113, 114.
[3] Lord Braybrook's note to *Pepys*, v. 114.
[4] Burn's *Eccles. Law*, i. p. 328. High Churchmen, however, sometimes had their jest at the special love of the opposite party for 'their own Protestant pews.'—T. Lewis' *Scourge*, Apr. 8, 1717, No. 10.
[5] Anderson's *British Poets*, ix. 82. [6] Paterson's *Pietas Londinensis*, *passim*.
[7] Prior's *Poems*, 'Epitaph on Jack and Joan'—*B. Poets*, vii. 448.

Which still their ancient nature keep,
By lodging folks dispos'd to sleep.[1]

Those of the more exclusive sort were often built up with tall partitions, like Lady Booby's, 'in her pew, which the congregation could not see into.'[2] Sometimes they were curtained, 'sometimes filled with sofas and tables, or even provided with fireplaces;'[3] and cases might be quoted where the tedium of a long service, or the appetite engendered by it, were relieved by the entry, between prayers and sermon, of a livery servant with sherry and light refreshments.[4] Even into cathedrals cumbrous ladies' pews were often introduced. Horace Walpole tells an extraordinary story of Gloucester Cathedral in 1753. A certain Mrs. Cotton, who had largely contributed to whitewashing and otherwise ornamenting the church, had taken it into her head that the soul of a favourite daughter had passed into a robin. The Dean and Chapter indulged her in the whim, and she was allowed to keep a kind of aviary in her private seat. 'Just by the high altar is a small pew hung with green damask, with curtains of the same, and a small corner cupboard painted, carved, and gilt, for birds in one corner.'[5] In Ripon Cathedral, some of the old tabernacle work of the stalls was converted into pews.[6] Everywhere the pew system reigned uncontrolled, pampering self-indulgence, fostering jealousies, and too often thrusting back the poor into mean, comfortless sittings, in whatever part of the church was coldest, darkest, and most distant from sight and hearing. Towards the end of the century its evils began to be here and there acknowledged. The population was rapidly increasing in the larger towns; and the new proprietary chapels erected to meet this increase were often commercial speculations conducted on mere principles of trade, most unworthy of a National Church. No reflecting Churchman could fail to be disgusted with a traffic in pews which in many cases absolutely excluded the

[1] 'Baucis and Philemon'—*B. Poets*, ix. 13.

[2] Fielding's *Jos. Andrews*, book iv. chap. i.

[3] A. J. B. Beresford Hope, *Worship in the Church of England*, 1874, 17.

[4] Such an instance was once mentioned to the writer by Bishop Eden, the present Primus of the Episcopal Church in Scotland.

[5] Walpole's *Letters*, ii. 35, quoted by Walcot, 56.

[6] Walcot, 53.

poor.[1] Among the new churches there were in fact only one or two honourable exceptions to the general rule. A free church was opened at Bath, another at Birmingham;[2] it appears that all the rest of these 'Chapels of Ease' unblushingly gave the lie so far as in them lay, to the declaration of our Lord that the poor have the Gospel preached unto them. Some time had yet to elapse before improved feeling could do much towards abating the unchristian nuisance. But energetic protests were occasionally heard. 'I would reprobate,' wrote Mrs. Barbauld (1790) 'those little gloomy solitary cells, planned by the spirit of aristocracy, which deform the building no less to the eye of taste than to the eye of benevolence, and insulating each family within its separate enclosure, favour at once the pride of rank and the laziness of indulgence.'[3] 'It is earnestly to be wished,' remarked Dr. Sayers about the same time, 'that our churches were as free as those of the continent from these vile incumbrances.' Their injury to architectural effect was the least of their evils. They were fruitful, he said, in jealousies, and utterly discordant to the worship of a God who is no respecter of persons.[4]

Of the galleries, so often enumerated in Paterson's account of London Churches (1714) among recently erected 'ornaments,' little need be said, except that they were often wholly unnecessary, or only made necessary by the great loss of space squandered in the promiscuous medley of square and ill-shaped pews. It was an object of some ambition to have a front seat in the gallery. 'The people of fashion exalt themselves in church over the heads of the people of no fashion'[5] A crowded London church in the old times, gallery above gallery thronged with people, was no doubt an impressive spectacle, not soon to be forgotten. To many

[1] *Considerations on the present State of Religion*, 1801, p. 47.—Polwhele's Introduction to *Lavington*, § ccxx. &c.

[2] *Considerations*, &c. 53. *Qu. Rev.* vol. x. 54.

[3] *A. L. Barbauld's Works*, by Lucy Aikin, ii. p. 459.

[4] 'Hints on English Architecture'—Dr. F. Sayers' *Life and Works*, ii. 203. So also Bishop Watson, in 1800, complained that not only were there many too few churches in London, but 'the inconvenience is much augumented by the pews which have been erected therein. He would have new churches built with no appropriated seats, simply benches'—*Anecdotes of Bishop Watson's Life*, ii. 111.

[5] Fielding's *Joseph Andrews*, chap. 13.

the thought of galleried churches will revive a different set of remembrances. Dusky corners, a close and heavy atmosphere, back seats for children and the scantily favoured, to which sound reached as a drowsy hum, and where sight was limited to the heads of people in their pews, to their hats upon the pillars, and perhaps an occasional half-view of the clergyman in the pulpit, seen at intervals through the interstices of the gallery supports,—such are the recollections which will occur to some. Certainly they are calculated to animate even an excessive zeal for opening out churches, and creating wider space and freer air.

And who does not remember some of the other special adjuncts of an old-fashioned church, as it had been handed down little altered from the time of our great-grandfathers? There were the half-obliterated escutcheons, scarcely less dismal in aspect than the coffin plates with which the columns of the Welsh churches were so profusely decorated. No wonder Blair introduces into his poem on 'The Grave' a picture of—

> the gloomy aisles
> Black plastered, and hung round with shreds of 'scutcheons.[1]

And then, in the place of the ancient rood loft, was that masterpiece of rural art,—

> Moses and Aaron upon a church wall,
> Holding up the Commandments, for fear they should fall.[2]

There was the glorified record of the past deeds of parish officials, well adapted to fire the emulation of a succeeding generation—

> With pride of heart, the Churchwarden surveys
> High o'er the belfry, girt with birds and flowers,
> His story wrought in Capitals: 'twas I
> That bought the font; and I repaired the pews.[3]

There were the tables of benefactors conspicuous under the Western Gallery. The Lower House of Convocation in 1710 had issued special directions in recommendation of this

[1] Robert Blair's *The Grave*, lines 36–7.

[2] Quoted, with some humour, by Bishop Newton, in defending Sir Joshua Reynolds' proposals for paintings in St. Paul's.—*Works*, i. 142.

[3] Christoph. Smart's *Poems*, 'The Hop Garden,' book ii.

practice. The bishops also, Fleetwood,[1] Secker,[2] and others—did not fail to enjoin it in their Charges. And not without reason; for a great number of parish benefactions appear to have been lost by lapse or otherwise about the beginning of the eighteenth century. Yet smaller letters, and a less prominent position, might have served the same purpose, with less disfigurement, and less offence to the decent humility which best befits the deeds of Christian benevolence.

The great three-decked pulpit of the Georgian age is still familiar to our memories. To the next generation it will be at length a curiosity of the past. Nor must the mighty sounding-board be forgotten, impending with almost threatening bulk over the preacher's head, and adorned with the emblematic symbol of grace:—

> I cast my eyes upon him, and explored
> The dove-like form upon the sounding-board.[3]

The pulpit had supplanted the old portable box-desk at the time of the Reformation, and had maintained itself in undiminished honour through all the subsequent changes. In rich London parishes much rare workmanship was often expended upon it. If not by its costliness, at all events by its dimensions, it was apt to throw all other church furniture into the shade. And 'in a few abnormal instances, particularly in watering places, the rostra would even overhang the altar, or occupy a sort of gallery behind it.'[4] During the earlier part of the century, an hour-glass, in a wood or iron frame, was still the not unfrequent[5] appendage to a pulpit. In the Elizabethan period they had been general. But perhaps the Puritan preachers had not cared to be reminded that preaching had its limits; or a later generation, on the other hand, might dread the suggestion that the sermon might last the hour. At all events, as they wore out, they were not often replaced; and Bishop Kennet,[6] writing in the third

[1] Fleetwood's 'Charge of 1710'—*Works*, 479.
[2] Secker's 'Charge of 1753'—*Eight Charges*, 191.
[3] John Byrom's *Poems*—Chalmers' *B. Poets*, xv. 214.
[4] Beresford Hope, *Worship in the Ch. of E.* 19.
[5] *Tatler*, No. 264.
[6] *Parochial Antiquities*—Jeaffreson, ii. 16 (note).

decade of the century, spoke of them as already beginning to be uncommon. They were chiefly to be seen in old-fashioned country churches, such as that where, in Gay's eclogue, the village swains followed fair Blouzelind to her burial, and listened while the good man warned them from his text, and descanted upon the uncertainty of life,—

> And spoke the hour-glass in her praise quite out.[1]

The bible 'of larger volume,' as directed in Lord Cromwell's injunctions, and in the Canons of 1751,[2] venerable with age, might sometimes be seen still chained to its desk,[3] as in the old days. In Pope's time, church bibles were very commonly in black-letter type.[4]

Litany desks were a great rarity. One in Exeter Cathedral appears to have been disused about 1740.[5]

Every one knows what a neglected aspect the font usually bore during the whole of the Georgian period; how it was often thrust into some corner of the church, as if it were a kind of encumbrance that could not be absolutely done away with, and very frequently supplanted by some basin or pewter vessel placed inside it. In 1799 Carter recorded with indignation that in Westminster Abbey the font had been altogether removed, to make space for some new monument, and was lying topsy turvy in a side room.[6] In this, however, as in other respects, the neglect that was too generally prevalent must of course not be spoken of as if it were by any means universal.

Towards the end of the seventeenth century, and in the reign of Queen Anne, there was some little discussion, in which Bishop Beveridge and others took part,[7] as to the propriety of retaining or renovating chancel screens. In mediæval times, these 'cancelli,' from which the chancel took its name, had been universal; and a few had been put up under the Stuart sovereigns, notwithstanding the offence

[1] Gay's *Poems*, 'The Dirge'—Anderson's *B. Poets*, viii. 151.

[2] Burn's *Eccl. Law*, i. 370.

[3] A few still remain, as at Rycote, in Oxfordshire.

[4] 'Smoothing the dogs' ears of the great bible . . . in the black letter in which our bibles are printed.'—'Memoirs of a Parish Clerk,' Pope's *Works*, vii. 225.

[5] Walcot, 115.

[6] *Gentleman's Mag.* vol. lxix. 667.

[7] Beresford Hope, *Worship*, &c. 68, 129.

with which they were regarded by those who looked upon them as one of 'the hundred points of popery.' Later in the century, they had ceased to be regarded either with animosity or favour, and where one had been spared, it was left for the most part to stand without further remark.

We find Archbishop Secker expressing his regret, not without cause, that chancels were not, as a rule, kept in much better order than other parts of the building. Incumbents were by no means so careful as they should be, and lay impropriators, whether private or collegiate, were generally strangely neglectful. 'It is indispensably requisite,' he added, 'to preserve them not only standing and safe, but clean, neat, decent, agreeable; and it is highly fit to go further, and superadd, not a light and trivial finery, but such degrees of proper dignity and grandeur as we are able, consistently with other real obligations.' [1]

The condition and decorations of the Lord's Table differed widely, especially in the earlier years of the period, in accordance with varieties of opinion and feeling in clergymen and in their congregations. For the most part it was insignificantly and meanly furnished, and hemmed closely in by the Communion rails. At the beginning of the century, it would appear that in the London churches a great deal of care and cost had been lately expended on 'altar pieces.' In one church after another, Paterson records the attraction of a 'fine'—a 'beautiful'—a 'stately'—a 'costly' altar-piece. [2] Many of these, however, would by no means approve themselves to a more cultivated taste than that which then prevailed. Instead of the Greek marbles and rich baldachino which Wren had intended for the East end of St. Paul's, the authorities substituted imitation marble, and fluted pilasters painted with ultramarine and veined with gold. [3] The Vicar of Leeds, writing to Ralph Thoresby in 1723, tells him that a pleasing surprise awaits his return. 'Our altar-piece is further adorned, since you went, with three flower-pots upon three pedestals upon the wainscot, gilt, and a hovering dove upon the middle one; three cherubs over the middle panel,

[1] Secker's *Fourth Charge* (1750), 154, and *Fifth Charge* (1753), 180.

[2] *Pietas Londinensis, passim.*

[3] W. Longman's *Hist. of St. Paul's*, p. 145.

the middle one gilt, a piece of open carved work beneath, going down towards the middle of the velvet.' If, however, the reader cannot altogether admire the picture thus summoned before his eyes, he will at all events agree with the words that follow: 'But the greatest ornament is a choir well filled with devout communicants.'[1] The painted 'crimson curtains' at the east end of Battersea Church, 'trimmed with amber, and held up by gold cord with heavy gold tassels,'[2] may serve as another representative example of the kind of 'altar-piece' which commended itself to eighteenth-century Churchmen.

Nothing, it might be imagined, could be more inoffensive than the use of the sacred monogram. But there were some at the beginning of the period, both Dissenters and Puritan Churchmen, who looked very suspiciously at it. They ranked it, together with bowing at the name of Jesus and turning eastward at the Creed, among Romish proclivities. 'What mean,' Ambrose Barnes had said towards the close of the previous century, 'these rich altar-cloths, with the Jesuits' cypher embossed upon them?'[3] So also that worthy man, Ralph Thoresby, had expressed himself 'troubled' to see at Durham, among other 'superstitions,' 'richly embroidered I. H. S. upon the high altar.'[4]

In Charles the First's time the Ritualistic party in the Church of England used sometimes to place upon the altars of their churches crucifixes and an array of candlesticks.[5] After the Restoration the former were never replaced. The two candles, however, interpreted as symbolical of the divine and human nature of the Lord, were by no means unfrequent in the churches of the last century, especially during its earlier years. Nicholls, in a preface of 1710 to Bishop Cosin's Prayer-book, giving a sort of popular explanation of the English order, for the use of foreigners, writes thus:—'Now the order wherewith this holy rite is celebrated in our churches is after this manner. First of all it is enjoined that the table or

[1] Ralph Thoresby's *Correspondence*, ii. 384.

[2] Alex. Gilchrist's *Life of Blake*, i. 41.

[3] Quoted, with a similar passage from *Story's Journal*, by Walcot, 104.

[4] Ralph Thoresby's *Diary*, i. 60.

[5] Report of Conference of 1641, upon 'Innovations in Discipline,' quoted in Hunt's '*Religious Thought in England*, i. 196.

altar should be covered over with a clean linen cloth or other decent covering; upon which the Holy Bible, the Common Prayer-book, the paten, and the chalice are to be placed. Two wax candles are to be set on; and the person who celebrates is to be arrayed with a solemn ecclesiastical habit, that is, a surplice and hood.'[1] Mr. Beresford Hope speaks of an old picture in the possession of Westminster Abbey, referred to the beginning of the eighteenth century, in which candles are represented burning upon the altar.[2] This, at all events, was most unusual. Bishop Hoadly, writing against the Ritualistic practices of some congregations, speaks of 'the over-altars and the never-lighted candles upon them.'[3] In Durham Cathedral, which by traditional custom retained throughout the century a higher Ritual in some respects than was to be found elsewhere, the 'tapers' of which Thoresby speaks[4] were probably more than two in number.

The credence, or side table, upon which the sacramental elements are placed previously to being offered, in accordance with the rubric, upon the Lord's Table, had been objected to by many Puritan Churchmen. Provision was rarely made for this in eighteenth-century churches. It is mentioned as somewhat exceptional on the part of Bishop Bull, that 'he always offered the elements upon the Holy Table himself before beginning the Communion service.'[5]

Puritan feeling had very unreasonably regarded the cross with almost as much jealousy as the crucifix. This idea had, in the last century, so far gained ground, that the Christian emblem was not often to be seen, at all events in the interior of churches, and that those who did use it in their churches or churchyards were likely to incur a suspicion of Popery. An anonymous assailant of Bishop Butler in 1767, fifteen years after the death of that prelate, made it a special charge against him that he had 'put up the Popish insignia of the cross in his chapel at Bristol.'[6]

[1] Quoted in Beresford Hope, *Worship*, &c., 109. [2] Id. p. 232.
[3] Quoted by Hunt, iii. 48, note. [4] Thoresby's *Diary*, i. 60.
[5] R. Nelson's *Life of Bishop Bull*, 52.
[6] Quoted in a Rev. of Surtees' 'Hist. Durham,' *Qu. Rev.* 39, 404. The charge was so persistently repeated that Archbishop Secker thought it just to his friend's memory to publish a formal defence. He regretted, however, that the cross had been erected. It was a cross of white marble led into a black slab, and sur-

Steele, speaking, in one of his papers in the 'Guardian,' of Raphael's picture of our Saviour appearing to His disciples after His resurrection, makes some remarks upon religion and sacred art. 'Such endeavours,' he says, 'as this of Raphael, and of all men not called to the altar, are collateral helps not to be despised by the ministers of the Gospel. . . . All the arts and sciences ought to be employed in one confederacy against the prevailing torrent of vice and impiety; and it will be no small step in the progress of religion, if it is as evident as it ought to be, that he wants the best sense a man can have, who is cold to the "Beauty of Holiness."'[1] Tillotson, and other favourite writers of Steele's generation, had dwelt forcibly, and with much charm of language, upon the moral beauty of a virtuous and holy life. But there had never been a time when the English Church in general, as distinguished from any party in it, had cared less to invest religious worship with outward circumstances of attractiveness and beauty. As to the particular point which gave occasion to Steele's remarks, whatever might be said for or against the propriety of painting in churches, there was in his time little disposition to open the question at all.[2] One of the very few instances where a painting of the kind is spoken of, was connected with a very discreditable scandal. At a time when party feeling ran very high, White Kennet, Bishop of Peterborough, the well-known author of the 'Parochial Antiquities,' had made himself exceedingly obnoxious to some of the more extreme members of the High Church section, by his answer to Sacheverell's sermon upon 'false brethren.'[3] Dr. Walton, Rector of Whitechapel, put up at this juncture in his church a painted altar-piece in representation of the Last Supper, with Bishop Kennet conspicuous in it as Judas Iscariot. 'To make it the more sure, he had the doctor's great black patch put under his wig upon the forehead.'[4] It

rounded by cedar work, in the wall over the Communion Table.—T. Bartlett's *Memoirs of Bishop Butler*, 91, 155.

[1] *Guardian*, No. 21, April 4, 1713.

[2] There were, however, some who put up pictures about the altar, and defended their use as 'the books of the vulgar'—*Life of Bishop Kennet*, in an. 1716, 125.

[3] Lathbury's *History of the Nonjurors*, 256.

[4] *Diary of Mary Countess Cowper* (1714–20), pub. 1864, 92; and *Life of Bishop White Kennet*, 1730, 141–2.

need hardly be added that the Bishop of London ordered the picture to be taken down.[1]

Sir Christopher Wren had intended to adorn the dome of St. Paul's with figures from sacred history, worked in mosaic by Italian artists. He was overruled. It was thought unusual, and likely also to be tedious and expensive.[2] But there were some who cherished a hope that some such embellishment was postponed only, not abandoned. Walter Harte, for example, the Nonjuror, in his poem upon painting, trusted that 'the cold north' would not always remain insensible to the claims of religious art. The time would yet come when we should see in our churches,

> Above, around, the pictured saints appear,

and when especially the metropolitan cathedral would be radiant with the pictorial glory which befitted it.

> Thy dome, O Paul, which heavenly views adorn,
> Shall guide the hands of painters yet unborn;
> Each melting stroke shall foreign eyes engage,
> And shine unrivalled through a future age.[3]

The question was brought forward in a practical shape in 1773. Two years earlier the State apartments at old Somerset Palace had been granted by the King to the Royal Academy. The chapel was included in the gift; and it was soon after suggested, at a general meeting of the society, 'that the place would afford a good opportunity of convincing the public of the advantages that would arise from ornamenting churches and cathedrals with works of art.'[4] This proposal was highly approved of by the society, and many of its members at once volunteered their services. Their president, however, Sir Joshua Reynolds, proposed a bolder scheme. He thought they should 'undertake St. Paul's Cathedral.' The amend-

[1] A very different anecdote may be told of an altar-piece in St. John's College, Cambridge. 'At Chapel,' wrote Henry Martyn, in 1800, 'my soul ascended to God; and the sight of the picture at the altar, of St. John preaching in the wilderness, animated me exceedingly to devotedness to the life of a missionary.'—*Journal, &c.*, ed. by S. Wilberforce, quoted in Bartlett's *Memoirs of Bishop Butler*, 92.

[2] Longman's *Hist. of St. Paul's*, 141.

[3] 'Essay upon Painting'—Anderson's *B. Poets*, ix. 824.

[4] *Memoirs of Sir J. Reynolds*, by H. W. Beechy, 224.

ment was carried unanimously. Application was accordingly made to the Dean and Chapter, who were pleased with the offer. Dean Newton, Bishop of Bristol, a great lover of pictures, was particularly favourable to the scheme, and warmly advocated it.[1] Sir Joshua promised 'The Nativity;' West offered his picture of 'Moses with the Laws;' Barry, Dance, Cipriani, and Angelica Kauffman engaged to present other paintings; and four other artists were afterwards added to the number. But the trustees of the building—Cornwallis, Archbishop of Canterbury, and Terrick of London—disapproved. Terrick was especially hostile to the idea, and when the Dean waited upon him and told him, with some exultation, of the progress that had been made, put an absolute veto upon the whole project. 'My good Lord Bishop of Bristol,' he said, 'I have been already distantly and imperfectly informed of such an affair having been in contemplation; but as the sole power at last remains with myself, I therefore inform your lordship that, whilst I live and have the power, I will never suffer the doors of the metropolitan church to be opened for the introduction of Popery into it.'[2]

Bishop Newton says, in his 'Memoirs,' that though there were some objectors, opinion was generally in favour of the offer made by the Academy, and that some churches and chapels adopted the idea. But St. Paul's probably suffered no loss through the further postponement of the decorations designed for it. In the first place, paintings—for these, rather than frescoes, appear to have been intended—were not the most appropriate kind of art for such an interior. Besides this, those 'earthly charms and graces,' which made Reynolds' style such an abomination to the delicate spiritual perceptions of the artist-poet Blake,[3] were by no means calculated to create any elevated ideal among his countrymen of what Christian art should be. And if the President of the Academy, the most renowned English painter of his age, was scarcely competent to such a work, what must be said of his proposed coadjutors? 'I confess,' said Dean Milman, 'I shudder at the idea of our walls covered with the audacious designs and tawdry colouring

[1] Bishop Newton's *Life and Works*, 1787, i. 142–4.

[2] *Memoir*, &c. i. 225.

[3] Alex. Gilchrist's *Life of W. Blake*, i. 96.

of West, Barry, Cypriani, Dance, and Angelica Kauffman.'[1] Such criticism would be very exaggerated if it were understood as a general condemnation of painters, whose merits in their own provinces of art were great. But it will universally be allowed that not to them, and scarcely to any other painters of the eighteenth century, could we look for the grandeur of thought or the elevated sentiment which an undertaking of the kind proposed so specially demanded.

Puritanism had been very destructive of the glass paintings which had added so much glory of colour to mediæval churches. The art had begun to decline, from a variety of causes, at the beginning of the Reformation. In Elizabeth's reign, few coloured windows of any note were executed. Under James I. and Charles I. the taste to some degree revived. A new style of colouring was introduced by Van Linge,[2] a skilful Flemish artist, who appears to have settled in England about 1610, and found many liberal patrons. It was an interval when much activity was displayed throughout the kingdom in the work of repairing and beautifying churches. When he died, or left the country, the art became all but dormant. The Restoration did little to resuscitate it. Religious taste and feeling were at a low ebb. Not only in England, but throughout the Continent also, the glass painters had no encouragement, and were continually obliged to maintain themselves by practising the ordinary profession of a glazier. And besides, long after the time when painted windows had become secure from Puritanic violence, a feeling lingered on that there was something un-Protestant in them —something inconsistent, it might be, with the pure light of truth. For many years more, few were put up; nor these, for the most part, without much difference of opinion, and sometimes a great deal of angry controversy.[3] It may have stirred the irony of men who had no sympathy with these suspicions, that corporations and private persons who would by no means[4] admit into their churches windows in which scenes from our Saviour's life were pictured in hues that

[1] Milman's *Annals of St. Paul*, quoted by Longman, *Hist. of St. P.* 153.

[2] Jas. Dallaway on *Architecture*, &c. 443-5.

[3] Beresford Hope, *Worship*, &c. 19.

[4] 'When they startle at a dumb picture in a window.'—T. Lewis, in *The Scourge*, Apr. 9, 1717, No. 9.

vied with those of the ruby and the sapphire, had often no scruples in emblazoning upon them, to their own glorification, the arms of their family or their guild.[1] Winston, speaking of the east window[2] in University College, Oxford, done by Giles of York in 1687, the earliest example of a stained glass window after the Reformation, remarks how much the art had deteriorated even in its most mechanical departments.[3] In the first quarter, however, of the eighteenth century, there was some improvement in it. Joshua Price, in the east window of St. Andrew's, Holborn, has 'rivalled the rich colouring of the Van Linges. The painting is deficient in brilliancy, and some of the shadows are nearly opaque; yet these defects may almost be overlooked in the excellence of its composition, and in its immense superiority over all other works executed between the commencement of the eighteenth century and the revival of the mosaic system.'[4] Joshua Price also executed some of the side windows in Magdalene College, and restored, in 1715, those in Queen's College, Oxford, the work of Van Linge, which had been broken by the Puritans.[5] William Price painted, in 1702, the scenes from the life of Christ, depicted on the lower lights of Merton College Chapel. They are 'weak as regards colour, enamel being used almost to the substitution of coloured glass,'[6] and lose in beauty and effect by the glaring yellow in which they are framed. He also painted the windows which were put up in Westminster Abbey by order of Parliament in 1722,[7] and repaired with considerable skill the Flemish windows of Rubens's time, which he purchased and put up on the south side of New College Chapel.[8] It is remarkable that the Prices appear to have been the last who possessed the old secret of manufacturing the pure ruby glass.[9] After their time, until its rediscovery some forty years ago in France, it was a familiar instance of a 'lost art.'

When nearly fifty years had passed, some little attention

[1] Various illustrations of this may be found in Paterson's *Pietas Londinensis*.
[2] A new one was substituted for it in 1864.
[3] C. Winston, *Hints on Glass Colouring*, i. 206. [4] Id. 207.
[5] J. Dallaway, *Architecture*, &c. 446.
[6] Winston, *Hints*, &c. 207. [7] Callaway, 446.
[8] C. Winston, *Memoirs Illustrative of the Art of Glass Painting*, 153.
[9] C. Winston. *Hints*, &c. i. 216.

began to be once more turned, chiefly in colleges and cathedrals, to the adornment of churches with coloured windows. The most memorable examples are in New College Chapel. Pickett, of York, painted between 1765 and 1777 the lower lights of the northern windows in the choir, with much brilliancy of colour, but in a style very inferior to the work of the Flemings and William Price on the other side.[1] The great window in the antechapel, erected a few years later, certainly avoided that uniformity of gaudiness[2] which Warton so greatly complained of in Pickett's work. Its design employed for several years[3] the genius of Sir Joshua Reynolds. The central picture of the Nativity, after Correggio's 'Notte' at Modena, was exceedingly fine as a sketch in colours. Unfortunately, it was wholly unsuited to glass, and remains a standing proof that oil and glass paintings cannot be rivals, their principles being essentially different. A competent critic pronounces that, had it been executed in coloured glass, it would still have been unsatisfactory.[4] As it is, the dull stains and enamels employed by Jarvis give it what Horace Walpole called 'a washed-out' effect. Reynolds has introduced into it likenesses both of himself and Jarvis, as shepherds worshipping. Of the allegorical figures beneath, Hartley Coleridge justly remarks that personifications which are nowhere found in Scripture are not well adapted for a church window.[5]

Another glass painting of something the same character, and showing the same futile attempt at impossible effects of light and shade,[6] was a picture of the Resurrection, executed by Edgington, from a design by Sir Joshua Reynolds, for the Lady Chapel of Salisbury Cathedral. Mention should also be made of the great eastern window in St. George's Chapel, Windsor, by Jarvis and Forrest, and designed by West. The three last examples quoted by Dallaway are Pearson's windows in Brasenose Chapel, his scenes from St. Paul's life, at St. Paul's, Birmingham, and his Christ

[1] C. Winston, *Memoirs*, &c. 153.

[2] 'Shapes that with one broad glare the gazer strike,
Kings, bishops, nuns, apostles, all alike.'—*T. Warton.*

[3] Beechy's *Memoirs of Sir Josh. Reynolds*, 239.

[4] C. Winston, *Hints*, &c. i. 211.

[5] Hartley Coleridge, *Marginalia*, 253.

[6] C. Winston, *Memoirs*, &c. 176.

bearing the Cross, at Wanstead, Essex.[1] ' All these were produced towards the close of the century. They have merit, but they show also how much had to be learnt before the slowly reviving art of glass painting could recover anything of its ancient splendour.

Many ancient church bells disappeared in the general wreck of monastic property at the commencement of the Reformation. Many more were broken up and sold during the Civil Wars. In the eighteenth century another danger awaited them. They were not converted into money for spendthrift courtiers, nor disposed of for State necessities, nor cast into cannons and other implements of war; but they came to be considered an useful fund which the guardians of churches could fall back upon. 'Very numerous were the instances in which four bells out of five have been sold by the parish to defray churchwardens' accounts.'[2] On the other hand, a great number of new bells were cast during the period, among which may be mentioned the great bell of St. Paul's, 1716, and those of the University Church, Cambridge, a peal particularly admired by Handel. The single family of Rudall of Gloucester, cast during the ninety years ending with 1774 no less than 3,594 church bells. Bell-ringing is often spoken of as an exercise and recreation of educated men. Hearne, the famous Oxford antiquary, was passionately fond of it. In his diary there are constant allusions to the feats of bell-ringing which took place in Oxford, and to the intricacies and technicalities of the art.[3] The learned Samuel Parr is said to have been excessively fond of church bells,[4] and so was Robert Southey the poet.

The old superstitions connected with the inauguration of bells, and the services expected from them, had become exchanged in either case for a great deal of coarse rusticity and vulgarity. Some pious aspiration was still in many cases graved upon the border of the metal; but often, instead of the old 'funera plango, fulgura frango,' &c., or the dedica-

[1] Dallaway's *Architecture*, &c. 454.

[2] *Qu. Rev.* vol. xcv. 317, 'Review of Gatty and Ellacombe on Bells.' The two next sentences are based on the same authority.

[3] Hearne's *Reliquiæ*, May 22, 1733, Jan. 2, 1734, May 2, 1734, &c.

[4] *Q. Rev.*, vol. xxxix. 308.

tion to Virgin or saint, the churchwarden who ordered the bell would order also an inscription, composed by himself, commemorative of his work and office. The doggerel was sometimes absurd enough:—

Samuel Knight made this ring
In Binstead Steeple for to ding;

or,

Thomas Eyer and John Winslade did contrive
To cast from four bells this peal of five;

or,

At proper times my voice I'll raise,
And sound to my subscribers' praise.[1]

And when the new bell was placed in the steeple, instead of the priestly unctions and quaint ceremonies of a past age, there was too often a heathenish scene of drunkenness and revelry. A common custom, alluded to by White of Selborne, was to fix it bottom upwards, and fill it with strong liquor. At Checkendon, in Oxfordshire, this was attended with fatal results. There is a tradition that one of the ringers helped himself so freely from the extemporised ale cask that he died on the spot, and was buried underneath the tower. Bells were still sometimes rung to dissipate thunderstorms, and perhaps to drive away contagion, under the notion that their vibrations purified the air. They were often rung on other occasions when they would have been much better silent. At Bath no stranger of the smallest pretension to fashion could arrive without being welcomed by a peal of the Abbey bells.[2]

The curfew has not even yet fallen entirely into disuse. In the last century it was oftener heard to 'toll the knell of parting day.' At Ripon its place was supplied by a horn sounded every evening at nine.[3]

'If,' said Robert Nelson, 'his senses hold out so long, he can hear even his passing bell without disturbance.' Towards the beginning of the century, this old custom seems to have been tolerably general. Its original object had been to invite prayers in behalf of a departing soul, and to summon the priest, if he had had no other admonition, to his last duty of extreme

[1] *Qu. Rev.* vol. xcv. 328.
[2] Oliver Goldsmith's 'Life of K. Nash, *Works*, iii. 374.
[3] Brand's *Popular Antiquities*, ii. 224.

unction. It was retained by the sixty-seventh canon as a solemn reminder of mortality. But towards the end of the century it was fast becoming obsolete. Pennant, writing in 1796, says that though the practice was still punctually kept up in some places, it had fallen into general desuetude in the towns.[1]

Churches neglected and in disrepair were not likely to be surrounded by well-kept churchyards. During the Georgian period it was common enough to see churchyards which might have served as pictures of dreariness and gloom. Webb's collection of epitaphs, published in 1775, is prefaced by some introductory verses which intimate, without any idea of censure, a condition of things which was clearly not very exceptional in the churchyards of towns and populous villages:—

> Here nauseous weeds each pile surround,
> And things obscene bestrew the ground;
> Skulls, bones, in mouldering fragments lie,
> All dreadful emblems of mortality.[2]

Secker hopes the clergy of his diocese will keep their churchyards 'neat and decent, taking the profits of the herbage in such manner as may rather add beauty to the place.' But he implies that there were many incumbents who turned their cattle into the sacred precincts, 'to defile them, and trample down the grave-stones; and make consecrated ground such as you would not suffer courts before your own doors to be.'[3] And there were some who were not satisfied with turning in their cow and horse.[4] Practices lingered within the recollections of living men which would now-a-days cause a parochial rebellion. While, for example, the transition from licence to order was in progress, a certain rector had sown an unoccupied strip of the burial-ground with turnips. The archdeacon at his visitation admonished this gentleman not to let him see turnips when he came there next year.

[1] T. Pennant's *Holywell*, &c. 99.
[2] T. Webb's *Collect. of Epitaphs*, 1775. i. pref.
[3] Secker's *Eight Charges*, 182. Charge of 1753.
[4] 'Lest her new grave the parson's cattle raze,
For both his cow and horse the churchyard graze.'
Gay's *Shepherd's Week*.

The rebuked incumbent could so little comprehend these decorous scruples that he supposed Mr. Archdeacon to be inspired by a zeal for agriculture, and the due rotation of crops. 'Certainly not, sir,' said he, ''twill be *barley* next year.'[1]

For the most part, however, there was nothing to give gross offence to the eye. Gray, in his charming elegy, used words exactly expressive of the ordinary truth, when he called it 'this neglected spot.' It was tranquil enough, and suggestive of pensive meditation, shaded perhaps by rugged elms or melancholy yews; but the grass was probably rank and untended, and the ground a confused medley of shapeless heaps. Except in epitaphs, there were no particular signs of tenderness and care; no flowers, no shrubs, no crosses. The revival of care for the beauty and comeliness of churches, and the example of well-kept cemeteries, have combined, since the time of the last of the Georges, to effect an improvement in the general aspect of our churchyards, which was certainly very much needed. Culpable neglect, it may be added, was sometimes shown in the admission of jesting or profane epitaphs. The inscription on Gay's monument in Westminster Abbey is a well-known example. One other instance, in illustration, will be abundantly sufficient. Imagine the carelessness of supervision which could allow the following buffoonery to be set up (1764) in the cathedral churchyard of Winchester:—

> Here rests in peace a Hampshire grenadier
> Who kill'd himself by drinking poor small beer;
> Soldier, be warned by his untimely fall,
> And when you're hot, drink strong, or none at all.[2]

In some churchyards, however, there were increasing signs, as the century advanced, of a seemly reverence for the solemn and hallowed associations which cleave to a Christian burial-ground. This may be exemplified by some extracts from the vestry minutes of St. Lawrence Pountney.[3] 'May 12, 1681. Ordered: that for the future no cloaths shall be dried in the Church ground, and that the Churchwardens shall cause grass to grow thereon, and beautify the same by planting trees where they shall think convenient.' 'April 5, 1711.

[1] *Qu. Rev.* vol. xc. 294.

[2] T. Webb's *Collection of Epitaphs*, 1775, ii. 28.

[3] H. B. Wilson's *History of St. Lawrence, Pountney*, 175.

Ordered: that Mr. Leng should have notice that his cocks and hens must not be in the Churchyard.' 'September 28, 1728: 'The old trees to be taken up, and sickemore and arbelle half of each be planted instead.' In Wales, and in a few places in the south and west of England, the custom still lingered of planting graves with flowers and sweet herbs:

> Two whitened flintstones mark the feet and head;
> While there between full many a simple flower,
> Pansy and pink, with languid beauty smile;
> The primrose opening at the twilight hour,
> And velvet tufts of fragrant camomile.[1]

Pepys makes mention of a churchyard near Southampton where the graves were accustomed to be all sown with sage.[2]

Before leaving the subject of church fabrics and their immediate surroundings, some little mention should be made of the effort made at the beginning of the century to supply the deficiency of churches in London. 'After some pause,' writes Addison, in one of his Roger de Coverley papers, 'the old knight, turning about his head twice or thrice to take a survey of the great metropolis, bid me observe how thick the City was set with churches, and that there was scarcely a single steeple on this side Temple Bar. "A most heathenish sight!" said Sir Roger. "There is no religion at this end of the town. The fifty new churches will very much mend the prospect, but church work is slow, very slow."'[3] That growth of London, which was to bring within its vast embrace village after village and hamlet after hamlet, was already fast progressing, and in the early part of the century had greatly outstripped all church provision. Dean Swift, it is said, has the credit of having first aroused public attention to this want. In a paragraph of his 'Project for the Advancement of Religion,' he had said 'that five parts out of six of the people are absolutely hindered from hearing divine service, particularly here in London, where a single minister with one or two curates has the care sometimes of about 20,000 souls incumbent on him.'[4]

[1] Elegy written in a churchyard in S. Wales, 1787, W. Mason's *Works*, 1811, i. 113.

[2] Quoted in Brand's *Popular Antiquities*, ii. 299.

[3] *Spectator*, No. 383, May 20, 1712.

[4] 'Project, &c.' 1709—Swift's *Works*, viii. 105, with Sir W. Scott's note.

A resolution was carried in the House of Commons (May 1711), that fifty new churches were necessary within the bills of mortality, and 350,000*l.* were granted for the purpose, 'which was a very popular thing.'[1] The sum was raised by a duty on coal—2*s.* per chaldron from 1716 to 1720, and 3*s.* from 1720 to 1724.[2] After this exertion, creditable alike to Parliament and to the citizens of London, the work of church-building seems to have pretty nearly ended for the century. Towards the middle of it, the bishops complained in their Charges that there was no spirit for building churches, and that the occasional briefs issued for the purpose brought in very little.[3] Fifty years later the question had again become too serious to be overlooked, and with the revival of deeper religion in the Church, there was little likelihood of its being allowed to rest. In large towns, the disproportion between the population and the number and size of churches had become so great 'that not a tenth of the inhabitants could be received into them were they so disposed.'[4] A return made in 1811 showed that in a thousand large parishes in different parts of the kingdom there was church accommodation for only a seventh part of their aggregate population.[5] Parliament granted a million for the erection of new churches, and large subscriptions were raised by the societies. But Polwhele, writing in 1819, said there were two large London parishes, with a joint population of above 120,000, which kept their village churches with room for not more than 200; and that in 1812, Dr. Middleton tried in vain to build a new church for St. Pancras, where the population was 100,000 and the church would only accommodate 300.[6] These facts seem almost incredible; probably the writer from whom they are quoted overlooked subsidiary chapels attached to the parish church. It is, however, very clear that in London and many of the large towns no energetic efforts had for a long time been made to meet necessities of very crying urgency.

Bishop Beveridge, writing in the first years of the last century, lamented that 'daily prayers are shamefully neglected

[1] Calamy's *Own Life*, ii. 239. [2] *Annals of England*, iii. 202.
[3] Secker's *Fifth Charge*, 1753. Butler's *Durham Charge*, 1751.
[4] *Considerations on the Present State of Religion*, 1801, chap. v.
[5] *Qu. Rev.* vol. x. 57.
[6] R. Polwhele's Introduction to *Lavington*, cclxxxi.

all the kingdom over; there being very few places where they have public prayers upon the week days, except perhaps on Wednesdays and Fridays.'[1] But in towns this order of the Church was far more carefully observed in Queen Anne's reign, and for some little time afterwards, than it has been since, at all events, until a very recent date. Archbishop Sancroft, in his circular letter of 1688 to the bishops of his province, had specially urged the public performance of the daily offices 'in all market and other great towns,' and as far as possible in less popular places also.[2] In London there was little to complain of. Although Puritan opinion had been unfavourable to daily services—Baxter having gone so far as to say, that 'it must needs be a sinful impediment against other duties to say common prayer twice a day'[3]—the old feeling as to the propriety of daily worship was by no means so thoroughly impaired as it soon came to be. Conscientious Church people in towns would generally have acknowledged that it was a duty, wherever there was no real impediment. Paterson's account of the London churches shows that, in 1714, a large proportion of them were open morning and evening for Common Prayer. He notes, however, with an expression of great regret, that the number of worshippers was visibly falling off, and that in some cases evening service was being wholly discontinued in consequence of the paucity of attendance.[4] In the popular writings of Queen Anne's time constant allusion may be found to the early six-o'clock matins. It must be acknowledged, however, that the daily services were sometimes attended for other purposes than those of devotion. Steele, in a paper in the 'Guardian,'[5] in which he highly commends the practice of daily morning prayers, says that 'going to six-o'clock service, upon admonition of the morning bell, he found when he got there many poor souls who had really come to pray. But presently, after the confession, in came pretty young ladies in mobs, popping in here and there about the church, clattering the pew doors

[1] Beveridge's *Necessity and Advantages of Public Prayer*, 34.

[2] Lathbury's *Hist. of the Nonjurors*, 77.

[3] Baxter's *English Nonconformity*, chap. 41. Quoted in Bingham's 'Origines Ecclesiasticæ'—*Works*, ix. 128.

[4] Paterson's *Pietas Londinensis*, 305.

[5] *Guardian*, No. 65, May 26, 1713.

behind them, and squatting into whispers behind their fans.' Before long 'there was a great deal of good company come in.' A few did, indeed, seem to take pleasure in the worship; but many seemed to make it a task rather than a voluntary act, and some employed themselves only in gossip or flirtation. He remarks, towards the close of the paper, that later hours [1] were becoming more in vogue than the early service.

The duty of daily public worship was, as might be expected, chiefly insisted upon by the High Churchmen of the period. Thus we find Robert Nelson urging it. There were very few men of business, he said, who might not 'certainly so contrive their affairs, as frequently to dedicate half an hour in four-and-twenty to the public service of God.' [2] Dodwell's biographer speaks of the great attention he paid to the daily prayers of the Church.[3] Bull introduced at Brecknock daily prayers, instead of their only being on Wednesdays and Fridays; and at Carmarthen morning and evening daily prayers, whereas there had been only morning prayers before. In 1712 these were kept up and well frequented.[4] Archbishop Sharp admonished his town clergy to maintain them regularly.[5] Whiston, while he was yet incumbent of Lowestoft, used at daily matins and vespers an abridgment of the prayer approved by Bishop Lloyd.[6] The custom was, however, by no means confined to High Churchmen. Thoresby, while he was yet more than half a Dissenter, feeling, for instance, much scruple as to the use of the cross in baptism, remarks in his 'Diary,' 'I shall never, I hope, so long as I am able to walk, forbear a constant attendance upon the public common prayer twice every day, in which course I have found much comfort and advantage.' [7] Thus also a writer in the 'Guardian,' in 1713, remarked that there was a

[1] Pope represents morning prayer as going on at the same time that criminals were whipt in Bridewell, i.e. about 11 :—

'By Bridewell all descend,
As morning prayers and flagellations end.'
Dunciad, ii. pp. 269–70.

[2] R. Nelson, *Practice of True Devotion*, chap. i. § 3.

[3] Brokesby's *Life of Dodwell*, 1715, 542.

[4] Nelson's *Life of Bishop Bull*, 375–6.

[5] *Archbishop Sharp's Life*, by his Son, i. 201.

[6] Whiston's *Memoirs*, 1749, 124.

[7] Thoresby's *Diary*, Aug. 8, 1702, i. 375.

good deal of foolish party language about good and bad Churchmen, where the distinctions made were often both unmeaning and prejudicial. 'It has happened that the person who is seen every day at church has not been in the eyes of the world a Churchman; and he who has been very zealous to oblige every man to frequent it but himself, has been held to be a good son of the Church.'[1]

Some time before the century had run through half its course, daily services were fast becoming exceptional, even in the towns. The later hours broke the whole tradition, and made it more inconvenient for busy people to attend them. Year after year they were more thinly frequented, and one church after another, in quick succession, discontinued holding them. It was one sign among many others of an increasing apathy in religious matters. At places like Bath or Tunbridge Wells the churches were still open, and tolerably full morning and evening.[2] Elsewhere, if here and there a daily service was kept up, the congregation was sure to consist only of a few women; and the Bridget or Cecilia who was regularly there, was sure of being accounted by not a few of her neighbours, 'prude, devotee, or Methodist.'[3] In many London parishes special provision had been made, either by endowment or voluntary subscriptions, for the maintenance of daily services. Where the latter was the case, the subscriptions began rapidly to fall off. Malcolm has preserved a correspondence which passed in 1768 between Bishop Newton of Bristol and the inhabitants of the united parishes of St. Mary-le-Bow, St. Pancras, and Allhallows, of which, in accordance with a bad custom of the times, he continued to be rector. The bishop laments the diminution almost to nothing of the old subscription. The parishioners acknowledge that it is so; but argue, not without truth, that if the rector desires these services to be held, it should devolve upon him to provide them. They allow that attendance at the morning prayers had been generally omitted, but that they are by no means convinced of their propriety.[4] At the end of the century, and

[1] *Guardian*, No. 80, June 12, 1713.

[2] Goldsmith's 'Life of Nash'—*Works*, iii. 277–8. De Foe's *Tour through Great Britain*, 1738, i. 193, ii. 242.

[3] Lloyd's *Poems*, 'A Tale,' c. 1757. Cowper's *Poems*, 'Truth.'

[4] J. P. Malcolm, *Manners and Customs of London*, i. 363–73.

on till the end of the Georgian period, daily public prayers became rarer still. In the country they were kept up only 'in a few old-fashioned town churches.'[1] How much they had dwindled away in London becomes evident from a comparison between the list of services enumerated in the 'Pietas Londinensis,' published in 1714, and a book entitled 'London Parishes: an Account of the Churches, Vicars, Vestries,' &c., published in 1824.

Throughout the earliest part of the period, the Wednesday and Friday services, particularly enjoined by the canon, were held in the London parish churches almost without exception, and very generally in country parishes.[2] But as the idea of daily public worship became in the popular mind more and more obsolete, these also were gradually neglected and laid aside. In the middle of the century we find many more allusions to them than at its close. Secker, in his Charge of 1761, said there should always be prayers on these days.[3] John Wesley wrote, in 1744, to advocate the careful observance of the Wednesday and Friday 'Stations or Half-fasts;'[4] the poet Young held them in his church at Welwyn;[5] they formed part of the duty at a church to which Gilbert Wakefield, in 1778, was invited to be curate.[6] James Hervey, at a time when his health was fast failing, said that he still managed to preach on Wednesday evenings, except in hay-time and harvest,[7] &c. In 1824 there were Wednesday and Friday services in only a small minority of the London churches.[8]

Very similar remarks may be made in regard of the observance of Saints' days. In Queen Anne's time they were

[1] B. Hope, *Worship, &c., in the Ch. of E.*, 20.

[2] *Pietas Londinensis, passim.* [3] Secker's *Eight Charges*, 77.

[4] Whiston mentions this with approval in his *Memoirs*, 1769, x. 138. It is mentioned of Archbishop Sharp that he always kept Wednesday and Friday as days of humiliation, and Friday as a fast—*Life*, ii. 81. Hearne and Grabe were very much scandalised at Dr. Hough making Friday his day for entertaining strangers—Hearne's *Reliquiæ*, ii. 30. The boys at Appleby School, about 1730, always, as is incidentally mentioned, went to morning prayers in the Church on Wednesdays and Fridays ('Memoir of R. Yates,' appended to G. W. Meadley's *Memoirs of Paley*, 123).

[5] R. A. Willmott, *Lives of Sacred Poets*, 1838, ii. x. 173.

[6] Gilbert Wakefield's *Memoirs*, 1792, x. 137.

[7] James Hervey's *Works*, 1805. *Letter* cxiv. Oct. 28, 1753—*Works*, vol. vi.

[8] *London Parishes*, &c.

still generally kept as holy days, and business was even in some measure suspended.[1] There were services on these festivals in all the London churches.[2] We find, it is true, a High Church writer of this date, regretting that of late years the observance of these days had not been so strict as heretofore. He attributed this backwardness mainly to superstitious scruples derived from Puritan times, and to the immoderate pursuit of business.[3] The wonder rather was, that having been, for a considerable portion of the previous century, 'neglected almost everywhere throughout the kingdom,'[4] Church festivals should have recovered as much respect as they did. The extensive circulation of Robert Nelson's 'Festivals,' and the number of editions through which it passed, is in itself a sufficient proof that a great number of English Churchmen cordially approved a devout observance of the appointed holy days. But by the middle of the century the neglect of them was becoming general. Bishop Butler, speaking in his Charge of 1751 about the observances and ceremonies which had been retained by the Reformers of the English Church, alluded to this. He lamented that customs which tended to keep alive, during the week, a wholesome sense of devotion had in so many cases been allowed of late years to fall into disuse—'for instance, the service of the Church, not only upon common days, but also upon Saints' days; and many other things might be mentioned. Thus the people have no customary admonition, no public call to recollect the thoughts of religion from one Sunday to another.'[5] In the country, at all events, clergymen began to find that if they opened their churches for service on such days, scarcely any one attended them. One Tuesday, says Fielding in 'Joseph Andrews,' happened to be a holiday, and the lady went to church; but there was no one there except Parson Adams, his wife, and his clerk, together with herself and one of her servants. Banns were published, but there was no sermon.[6] Perhaps a little more

[1] A. Andrews' *The Eighteenth Century*, 63.
[2] Paterson's *Pietas Londinensis*.
[3] Johnson's *Clergyman's Vade-Mecum*, 1709, i. 179.
[4] *Life of Kettlewell*, 1719, 24.
[5] Butler's *Primary Durham Charge*.
[6] Fielding's *Joseph Andrews*, b. iv. ch. 4.

care in arranging the time and character of Saints'-day services might have prevented a venerable and useful tradition from thus falling through.[1]

Burnet wished that Lent were not observed with 'so visible a slightness.'[2] It was observed, certainly, and very generally, but also very superficially. In London there were a considerable number of special sermons on Wednesdays and Fridays in Lent, the place and preachers being notified beforehand in a printed list issued by the Bishop.[3] Colston's Bristol benefaction, of 1708, provided, amongst his other charities, for an annual series of fourteen Lent sermons. The Low Churchmen of William's and Queen Anne's time instilled a devout observance of the season no less than the clergy of the High Church party. Burnet has been mentioned. Fleetwood's words, in his sermon before the King, on the 1st Sunday in Lent, 1717, are worth quoting. 'Our Church,' he said, 'hath erected this temporary house of mourning, wherein she would oblige us annually to enter. . . . And that we might attend more freely to these matters, she advises abstinence, and a prudent retrenchment of all those superfluities that minister to luxury more than necessity: by which the busy spirits are composed and quieted; the loose and scattered thoughts are recollected and brought home, and such a serious, sober frame of mind put on that we can think with less distraction, remember more exactly, pray with more fervency, repent more earnestly, and resolve with more deliberation or amendment. These are the beneficial fruits and effects of a reasonable, well-governed abstinence, as every one may find by their experience.'[4] John Wesley, as might naturally be expected from one who in many of his sympathies was so decidedly a High Churchman, was always in favour of a religious observance of Lent, especially of Holy Week. Steele, in a paper of the 'Guardian,' specially addressed, in Lent 1713, to careless men of pleasure, begs them not to ridicule a season set apart for

[1] For J. Wesley's Observance of the Saints' Days, especially All Saints' Day, see p. 69.

[2] Burnet's *Four Discourses to the Clergy of Sarum*, 1694, 338.

[3] Paterson's *Pietas Londinensis*, Introd.

[4] Fleetwood's *Works*, 716.

humiliation. And passing mention may be made of indications, more or less trivial in themselves, of a tolerably general feeling throughout society that Lent was not quite what other seasons are, and ought not to be wholly disregarded. There were few marriages in Lent,[1] comparatively few entertainments, public or private;[2] in some cathedral towns the music of the choir was silent.[3] And just as Sunday is sometimes honoured only by the putting on of a better dress, so the fashionable world would often pay that easiest show of homage to the sacredness of the Lenten season, not by curtailing in any way their ordinary pleasures, but by going to the theatre in mourning.[4] Masquerades, too, were considered out of place, at all events unless they were disguised under another name—

> In Lent, if masquerades displease the town,
> Call them ridottos, and they still go down.[5]

In the Isle of Man, and there only, under the system of Church discipline set afoot and maintained in so remarkable a manner by the influence of the venerable Bishop Wilson, Lent was celebrated with much of the solemnity and austerity of primitive times. Immediately before its commencement, courts of discipline were held, in which Church censures were duly passed and notified. During the forty days penances were performed, and Easter was the time for re-admission into the full communion of the Church.[6]

Throughout the country Lent was very commonly selected as a time specially appropriate for public catechizing.[7] 'A Presbyter of the Church of England,' writing in the first year of this century, said that, except among the Evangelical clergy, it was almost confined to that season.[8] Secker also, in the middle of the century, expressed a similar regret.[9]

[1] Johnson's *Vade-Mecum*, i. 189. [2] e.g. Malcolm's *London*, &c. i. 18.
[3] Walcot's *Cathedrals*, &c. (of Rochester), 102.
[4] Doran's Note to *Horace Walpole's Journal*, i. 89.
[5] Bramston, quoted in Id.
[6] C. Cruttwell's *Life of Bishop Wilson*, 370.
[7] *Life of Kettlewell*, 24. Paterson's *Pietas Londinensis*, Introduction. II. B. Wilson's *Hist. of Merchant Taylors*, 1075. Chr. Wordsworth's *Memoirs of W. Wordsworth*, 8.
[8] *The Church of England Vindicated*, &c. 1801, 15.
[9] Secker's *Eight Charges*, 49.

'It was Passion Week,' writes Boswell, in 1772, 'that solemn season, which the Christian Church has appropriated to the commemoration of the mysteries of our Redemption, and during which, whatever embers of religion are in our breasts, will be kindled into pious warmth.'[1] He could hardly have written thus if Holy Week, and especially Good Friday, had not received at that time a fairly general observance. The rough treatment with which Bishop Porteus was requited[2] for his attempt to bring about a better regard for Good Friday might seem to show the contrary. But there was no period in the last century when throughout the country at large shops were not generally closed on that day, and the churches fairly attended. In London, however, its observance became much more lax as the century advanced. During Queen Anne's reign, a few shops were kept open, as appears from a communication made by Archbishop Sharp to the Queen,[3] but evidently only a few. These exceptions were afterwards much more common. When an observation to this effect was made, in 1775, to Dr. Johnson, he answered somewhat in a spirit of contradiction, and with his usual inclination to regard all existing customs in their most favourable light, that he thought 'the day was very well observed, upon the whole, even in London.'[4] This was by no means the opinion of many serious Churchmen, who, towards the beginning of the Evangelical revival, were gradually coming forward into prominence. Many notices had lately appeared in the public papers, severely animadverting upon the Church of England and its governors for what was called their apathy in the matter.[5] In 1776 Beilby Porteus, then Rector of Lambeth, published a pamphlet which was widely circulated by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, calling attention to the prevalent neglect of the day. No stranger, he said, who saw 'every kind of trade and traffic going on as usual, the fields full of labourers, and the same face of business and bustle,' could have the least imagination that it was set apart by authority, as a day of

[1] Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, ii. 191. [2] Beresford Hope, *Worship*, &c. 22.
[3] *Life of Archbishop Sharp*, by his Son, i. 318.
[4] Boswell's *Johnson*, ii. 354.
[5] Porteus' *Works*, vi. 107, 'On the Religious Observance of Good Friday.

public fasting, humiliation, and prayer.'[1] It is probable that Porteus has somewhat over-coloured his picture, and that the real truth is somewhere intermediate between his statement and that of Dr. Johnson's. At all events, the effect of this pamphlet, written as it was by a man who was exceedingly respected in London, is said to have been very marked. In a note appended to the tract in the collected edition of Porteus' Works, it is stated that the devout observance of the day recommended in it was to a great extent actually produced. 'On the very next return of the day, the shops were all shut up, the churches were crowded, and the utmost seriousness and decorum took place throughout the cities of London and Westminster and their environs.'[2] Terrick, Bishop of London, had a share in contributing to this result, by a letter which he addressed to the public papers,[3] in the March of 1777, a few months before his death.

A touching incident may here be quoted from Dean Stanley's 'Memorials of Westminster Abbey,' in relation to Handel's death. 'He had most seriously and devoutly wished, for some days before his death, that he might breathe his last on Good Friday, in hopes, he said, of meeting his sweet Lord and Saviour on the day of His resurrection.'[4] The great musician died, not indeed on Good Friday, but on Easter Eve, 1759.

In the Olney Hymns, published 1779, Christmas Day only is referred to among all the Christian seasons.[5] This was somewhat characteristic of the English Church in general during the greater part of the Georgian period. Other Christian seasons were often all but unheeded; Christmas was always kept much as it is now. It may be inferred, from a passage in one of Horsley's Charges, that in some country churches, towards the end of the century, there was no religious observance of the day.[6] But such neglect was altogether exceptional. The custom of carol singing was continued only in a few places, more generally in Yorkshire than elsewhere.[7]

[1] Porteus' *Works*, ii. 110, 111: 'On the Religious Observance of Good Friday.'

[2] Id. 136, and i. 35, 36.

[3] *Horace Walpole's Journal*, ii. 106.

[4] A. P. Stanley's *Memorials*, &c. 328.

[5] J. B. Pearson, in *Oxford Essays*, 1858, 165.

[6] Horsley's *Charges*, 114.

[7] Brand's *Popular Antiq.* 1777, i. 491.

There is some mention of it in the 'Vicar of Wakefield;' and one well-known carol, 'Christians, awake! salute the happy morn!' was produced about the middle of the century by John Byrom. In George Herbert's time it had been a frequent custom on all great festivals to deck the church with boughs. This usage became almost, if not quite, obsolete except at Christmastide. We most of us remember with what sort of decorative skill the clerk was wont, at this season, to 'stick' the pews and pulpit with sprays of holly. In the time of the 'Spectator'[1] and of Gay,[2] and later still,[3] rosemary was also used, doubtless by old tradition, as referring in its name to the mother of the Lord. Nor was mistletoe excluded.[4] In connection with this plant, Stanley says a curious custom was kept up at York, which in 1754 had not long been discontinued. 'On the eve of Christmas Day they carried mistletoe to the high altar of the cathedral and proclaimed a public and universal liberty, pardon, and freedom to all sorts of inferior and even wicked people, at the gates of the city, toward the four quarters of heaven.'[5] A number of other local customs, many of great antiquity, now at last disused, lingered on at Yule into the time of our grandfathers. On Christmas Day, Easter Day, and Whitsun Day there were very commonly two celebrations of the Holy Communion in the London churches.[6] In a few cases, especially during the earlier years of the century, there was a daily celebration during the octaves of these great festivals.[7] John Wesley, writing in 1777, makes mention that in London he was accustomed to observe the octave in this manner 'after the example of the Primitive Church.'[8] Throughout the latter part of the Georgian period little special notice seems to have been taken, in most churches, of Easter and Whitsuntide, and Ascension Day was very commonly not observed at all, except in towns.

As one among many other indications that at the beginning of the last century a shorter period than now had

[1] *Spectator*, No. 282.
[2] Gay's *Trivia*, ii. 436.
[3] Walcot's *Cathedrals*, &c., 137.
[4] Gay's *Trivia*, ii. 442.
[5] Stukeley's *Hist. of Carausius*, ii. 164. Quoted by Walcot, 137.
[6] Paterson's *Pietas Lond.*
[7] As at St. Dunstan's-in-the-West, &c. Id. 80.
[8] See p. 68.

elapsed since the days that preceded the Reformation, it may be mentioned that 'Candlemas' was not only a well-known date, especially for changing the hours of service, but retained some traces of being still a festival under that name. For instance, it was specially observed at the Temple Church;[1] and 'at Ripon, so late as 1790, on the Sunday before Candlemas Day, the Collegiate Church was one continued blaze of light all the afternoon, by an immense number of candles.'[2] Such traditions lingered in the north of England long after they had expired elsewhere.

It may be added that in Queen Anne's time we may still find the name of the Lord's mother mentioned in a tone of affectionate respect not at all akin either to the timidity, in this respect, of later days, or to the somewhat defiant and overstrained veneration professed by some modern High Churchmen. Thus when Paterson begins to enumerate the London churches called after her name, he speaks of her in a perfectly natural tone as 'the Virgin Mary, the mother of our ever-blessed Redeemer, Heaven's greatest darling among women.'[3]

In some of the London churches, as at St. Alban's, St. Alphege's, &c., special commemoration services were, in 1714, still kept in memory of the patron saints from whom they had been named.[4] In the country, at different intervals since the Reformation, there had been frequent and often angry discussions as to the propriety of continuing or suppressing the wakes which had been held from time immemorial on the dedication day of the parish church or on the eve of it.[5] The feeling of High Churchmen was now by no means so unanimous in their favour as it had been in Charles the First's reign. Bishop Bull, for instance, when he was yet rector of Avening, was quite alive to the evils of these often unruly festivals, and succeeded in getting it discontinued there.[6] Sometimes, where it had been held on the Sunday, a sort of compromise was effected, and, as at Claybrook, 'the church was filled on Sunday, and the Monday kept as a feast.'[7]

[1] *Piet. Lond.* 272.
[2] Walcot's *Cathedrals*, &c. 137.
[3] Paterson's *Pietas Londinensis*, 157.
[4] Id.
[5] *Spectator*, No. 161, Sept. 4, 1711.
[6] Nelson's *Life of Bull*, 312.
[7] Macaulay's *Hist. of Claybrook*, 1791, 93, quoted by Brand, ii. 12.

The parish perambulations customary in Rogation Week were generally less of a solemnity in the eighteenth than they had been in the seventeenth and preceding centuries.

> That every man might keep his own possessions,
> Our fathers used, in reverent processions,
> With zealous prayer, and with praiseful cheere,
> To walk their parish limits once a year.[1]

George Herbert, and Hooker, and many old worthies, had taken great pleasure in maintaining this old custom, thinking it serviceable not only for the preservation of parish rights and liberties, but for pious thanksgiving, for keeping up cordial feeling between rich and poor, and for mutual kindnesses and making up of differences.[2] Sometimes, however, the religious part of the ceremony was altogether omitted; and sometimes these 'gang-days' provided an occasion for tumultuous contests or for intemperance,[3] or served mainly as a pretext for a churchwardens' feast.[4] We find Secker in 1750 recommending his clergy to keep up the old practice, but to guard it from abuse, and to use the thanksgivings, prayers, and sentences enjoined by Queen Elizabeth.[5] At Wolverhamptom, until about 1765, 'the sacrist, resident prebendaries, and members of the choir, assembled at morning prayers on Monday and Tuesday in Rogation Week, with the charity children bearing long poles clothed with all kinds of flowers then in season, and which were afterwards carried through the streets of the town with much solemnity, the clergy, singing men and boys, dressed in their sacred vestments, closing the procession, and chanting in a grave and appropriate melody the "Benedicite." The boundaries of the parish were marked in many points by Gospel trees, where the Gospel was read.'[6]

Days appointed by authority of the State for services of humiliation or of thanksgiving were far more frequent in the earlier part of the last century than they are now. In King

[1] Wither's *Emblems*, 1635, quoted by Brand.
[2] J. Walton's *Life of Hooker*.—Hooker's *Works*, 1850, i. 63.
[3] Secker's *Charges*, 143.
[4] Wilson's *Hist. of St. Lawrence Pountney*, 114.
[5] Secker's *Charges*, 143. [6] J. Brand's *Popular Antiquities*, i. 199.

William's time there were monthly fasts throughout the war, every first Wednesday in the month being thus set apart.[1] Thus also, during the period when success after success attended the arms of Marlborough, there were never many months passed by without a day of thanksgiving. During the civil wars of the preceding century fast days had been very frequent. To a certain extent no doubt they had been used on either side as political weapons of party; but they were also genuinely congenial to the excited religious feeling of the nation, solemn appeals to the over-ruling power which guides the destinies of men. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, although religious energies were so far more languid than they had been in the preceding age, the great war that was raging on the Continent was still regarded somewhat in the light of a crusade. Not that it inspired enthusiasm, or awoke any spirit of romance. There was no such high-strung emotion in those who anxiously watched its progress. Still it was generally felt to be a struggle in which great religious principles were involved. The Protestant interest and the religious future of the Church and State of England were felt to be deeply concerned in its ultimate issues. And thus a good deal of half-religious, half-political feeling was centred on these appointed days of solemn fast or thanksgiving. The prayer for unity, calling upon the people to take to heart the dangers they were in by their unhappy divisions, seems to have been very generally read upon these occasions.[2] A political element in them was always clearly recognised by the Nonjurors. The more moderate among them, who attended other services of the National Church, would not, except in rare instances, attend these. 'They held that to be present on such special occasions, which were significant of a direct purpose, was to profess allegiance to the new reigning family, and therefore an act of dissimulation; but not so their attendance on the ordinary services.'[3]

The prayers appointed for these set days of humiliation appear to have often had the reputation of being neither impressive nor edifying. Whiston spoke, indeed, in the highest

[1] De Foe's *Works*, Chalmers, vol. xx. 8, note.

[2] *A Collection of Parl. Protests*, 1737, 164.

[3] *Life of Ken*, by a Layman, ii. 653.

terms of a prayer drawn up by Tenison on occasion of the great hurricane of 1703. He thought it a model composition, unequalled in modern and unsurpassed in ancient times.[1] But its excellences, he added, were especially marked by the strong contrast with the jejune and courtly formulas which usually characterized such prayers, and most of all those which had been written for the days of fasting during the war.[2] They were, too commonly, examples of the bad custom, scarcely to be extenuated by long established precedent, of clothing in the outward form of adulation of powers that be, what was ordinarily meant for nothing worse than expressions of patriotic loyalty. Another frequent fault of these special prayers was uncharitableness. Gilbert Wakefield speaks in particular of an 'execrable prayer against the Americans,' and of the storms which threatened him when he 'read it, but with the omission of all those unchristian words and clauses which constituted the very life and soul of the composition to the generality of hearers.'[3]

The two anniversaries of January 30 and November 5 gave rise—especially the former—to a whole literature of special sermons, the great majority of which should never have been preached, or at least never published. Extreme men on either side delighted in the favourable opportunity presented by the one or the other of these two days of airing their respective opinions on subjects which could not yet be discussed without excitement. Protestant ardour, scarcely satisfied with commemorating Gunpowder Treason in Church services which matched in language the bonfires of the evening, found scope also for Antipapal demonstrations in other and more distant reminiscences. November 27, the anniversary of Elizabeth's accession, had been celebrated in London in 1679 with the most elaborate processions.[4] In the earlier part of the eighteenth century it was still a great day in some parishes for riotous meetings,[5] and was solemnised in some churches with special sermons and religious services.[6]

[1] Whiston's *Memoirs*, 1749, 132.

[2] Id. and 406.

[3] G. Wakefield's *Memoirs*, 1792, 182.

[4] Malcolm's *Manners and Customs of London*, ii. 16–9.

[5] Id. 23.

[6] Brand's *Pop. Antiq.* i. 406–8.

On the 14th or 20th of August there were also commemorative sermons in several London churches in remembrance of the defeat of the Armada.[1] At St. Mary-le-Bow, Cheapside, this custom still survives.

Throughout the eighteenth century the old laws which required due attendance on public worship were still in force. They were, in fact, formally confirmed in the thirty-first year of George the Third;[2] and however much they had fallen into neglect, they were not removed from the statute-book till the ninth and tenth years of the present reign.[3] We are told, however, that when the Toleration Act was passed in 1689, by one of the chief provisions of which persons who frequented a legal dissenting congregation were excused from all penalties for not coming to church, there was a general and observable falling off in the attendance at divine worship.[4] Hitherto congregations had been swelled by numbers who went for no better reason than because it was the established rule of the realm that they must go. Henceforward, mistaken or not, it was the popular impression that people 'had full liberty to go to church or stay away; and the services were much deserted in favour of the ale-houses.'[5] At the beginning, however, of the eighteenth century, the churches were once again fuller than they had been for some time previously. Dissent was at that time thoroughly unpopular; and the practice of occasional conformity brought a considerable number of moderate Dissenters into Church. It was observed that churches in London which once had been very thinly attended now had overflowing congregations.[6] Unfortunately, this revival of church attendance was not long-lived. Year after year it continued to fall off, until it had become in many parts of the country deplorably small. In 1738 Secker deplored the 'greatly increased disregard to public worship.'[7] It was never neglected in England so much as during the corresponding period in Germany. Even

[1] Paterson's *Pietas Lond.* 23, 154, 164.

[2] Burn's *Eccl. Law*, iii. 235.

[3] H. J. Stephen's *Commentaries on the Laws*, 1858, iii. 54.

[4] Dean Prideaux' *Life and Letters*, 1747, 95, and R. South's *Sermons*, 1823, iv. 186.

[5] Prideaux, as above.

[6] Burnet, quoted in J. Hunt's *Hist. of Rel. Thought in E.* iii. 223.

[7] Secker's *Eight Charges*, 6.

in the worst of times, as a modern writer has truly observed, the average Englishman never failed to acknowledge that attendance at church or chapel was his duty.[1] Only it was a duty which, as time went on, was continually less regarded alike in the upper and lower grades of society. Bishop Newton, speaking in 1768 of Mr. Grenville, evidently regarded his 'regularly attending the service of the church every Sunday morning, even while he was in the highest offices,' as something altogether exceptional in a Minister of State.[2] His namesake, John Newton, the well-known writer of 'Cardiphonia' and the 'Olney Hymns,' says that when he was Rector of St. Mary, Woolnoth, in London, few of his wealthy parishioners came to church.[3] Religious reformers, towards the end of the century, awoke with alarm to the perception of serious evil, betokened by the general thinness of congregations. The migration of population from the centre of London to its suburbs had already set in; but the following assertion was sufficiently startling nevertheless. 'The amazing and afflictive desertion of all our churches is a fact beyond doubt or dispute. In the heart of the city of London, in its noblest edifices, on the Lord's day, repeated instances have been known that a single individual hath not attended the divine service.'[4] Another writer observes, in similar language, that 'the greater part of our churches, particularly in the metropolis, present a most unedifying and afflicting spectacle to the eyes of the sincere, unenthusiastic Christian.' 'Attendance was almost everywhere,' he adds, 'most shamefully small.'[5] Some of the remoter parts of England seemed to be absolutely in danger of relapsing into literal heathenism. Hannah More said, in a letter to John Newton (1796), that in one parish in her neighbourhood, 'of nearly two hundred children, many of them grown up, hardly any had ever seen the inside of a church since they were christened. I cannot tell you the avidity with which the Scriptures were received

[1] B. Hope, *Worship in the Ch. of E.* 10. Secker makes the same remark, *Eight Charges*, 295.

[2] Bishop Newton's *Life and Works*, i. 115.

[3] J. Newton's *Memoirs*, 54.

[4] *The Church of England Vindicated*, 1801, 40.

[5] *Considerations on the Present State of Religion*, 1801, 21, 29.

by many of these poor creatures.'[1] But things had indeed come to a pass in the country district where this indefatigable lady pursued her Christian labour. 'We have in this neighbourhood thirteen adjoining parishes without so much as even a resident curate.'[2] Of such villages she might well add, that they 'are in Pagan darkness, and upon many of them scarcely a ray of Christianity has shone. I speak from the most minute and diligent examination.'[3] No doubt the locality of which she spoke was suffering under very exceptional neglect; but somewhat similar instances could have been produced in other parts of England. A hundred years earlier, Ralph Thoresby, travelling in Yorkshire, had expressed his amazement that 'on the Lord's Day we rode from church to church and found four towns without sermon or prayers.'[4] This is scarcely the place to enter further into the degree of spiritual destitution which prevailed in many parts of England, and into the causes which brought it about. It may be enough here to remark that the requickening of religious activity in the Church of England, mainly through the labours of clergy and laymen of the Evangelical school, came none too soon.

It should be added that, owing mainly to the thoroughly bad system of bundling three or four poor livings together, in order to provide respectable maintenance for a clergyman, it was very common in country places to have only one service on the Sunday. Nothing could be much more likely than this to promote laxity of attendance at divine worship.

Dean Sherlock, in a treatise upon religious assemblies, published by him in 1681, remarked severely upon the unseemly behaviour which was constantly to be seen in church—the looking about, the whispering, the talking, the laughing, the deliberate reclining for sleep. Whether it had arisen out of contempt for all the externals of worship, or whether it were owing rather to a wild fear of any semblance of fanaticism or of hypocrisy, this rude and slovenly conduct had come, he said, to a great height, and brought great scandal upon our worship. Not that such habits were in reality any new phenomenon.[5]

[1] H. More's *Memoirs*, i. 573. [2] Id. 656.
[3] Id. 458. [4] R. Thoresby's *Diary* (of 1684), i. 178.
[5] Sherlock's *Practical Discourse on Religious Assemblies*, 178.

If Sherlock even could have witnessed the interior of a church in mediæval or in Elizabethan times, the apparent indecorum of the scene would make the churches of his own day appear by contrast the very abode of gravity and composure. There was no longer anything to compare with the utter unconcern with which persons, when not engaged in acts of devotion, used to converse and walk about in the open naves of churches during the Middle Ages, their caps on, except at the elevation of the host, a falcon perhaps on the wrist of one, a hound following upon the heels of another.[1] The difference, however, was that then there was no conscious irreverence.[2] The body of the church was altogether different from the sanctuary, and when a person's own prayer was said, he felt very little constraint as a mere occasional spectator of some sacred rite. But this state of things had at length passed wholly away, partly from the very beginning of the Reformation, and more completely during the reign of Puritanism. The irreverent habits, which met with so much well-deserved censure at the end of the seventeenth and the first two decades of the eighteenth century, had very little, if any, traditionary connection with the different manners of an earlier age. It was real, not seeming irreverence.

The essayists of Queen Anne's reign made a steady and laudable effort to shame people out of these indecorous ways. The 'Spectator' constantly recurs to the subject. At one time it is the Starer who comes in for his reprobation. The Starer posts himself upon a hassock, and from this point of eminence impertinently scrutinises the congregation, and puts the ladies to the blush.[3] In another paper he represents an Indian chief describing his visit to a London church. There was a tradition, the illustrious visitor says, that the building had been originally designed for devotion, but there was very little trace of this remaining. Certainly there was a man in black, mounted above the rest, and uttering something with a good deal of vehemence. But people were not listening; they were most of them bowing and curtseying to one another.[4] Or a distinguished Dissenter came to church. 'After

[1] See the references and quotations in J. C. Jeaffreson's *Book of the Clergy*, 1870, ii. 24-8.

[2] See page 420.

[3] *Spectator*, No. 20.

[4] Id. No. 50.

the service was over, he declared he was very well satisfied with the little ceremony which was used towards God Almighty, but at the same time he feared he should not be able to go through those required towards one another. He feared he was not well bred enough to be a convert.'[1] Or a stranger preached, a grave and reverend man, but with something rather peculiar in his accent. Accordingly, the Gigglers are making it an occasion of mirth throughout the service, calling the attention of their friends with gestures of amusement, or almost bursting into laughter behind their fans.[2] Or the demeanour of a friend of Will Honeycomb is described. 'He seldom comes in till the prayers are about half over, and when he has entered his seat (instead of joining with the congregation) he devoutly holds his hat before his face for three or four moments, then bows to all his acquaintances, sits down, takes a pinch of snuff, and spends the remaining time in surveying the congregation.'[3] And in one of the last papers, the Rattlers are described—gentlemen who set themselves up for critics, and if anything in the sermon is not suited to their taste, or surpasses the narrow limits of their theology, signal to one another, or, if they are in the same pew, gesticulate and 'confer together in so loud and clamorous a manner, continued to the close of the discourse, and during the after psalm, as is not to be silenced but by the bells.'[4] In the 'Guardian,' although Steele is very indignant at the 'Examiner' having remarked upon the impropriety of a daughter of the Earl of Nottingham (who was mentioned almost by name) amusing herself with knotting in St. James's Chapel during divine service,[5] he reproves, just as the writer in the 'Spectator' had done, the flirting and jaunty whisperings that often went on in church.[6] Swift also animadverted upon it;[7] and Young, in one of his early Satires (1727), describes how

> Curt'sies to curt'sies then, with grace succeed;
> Not one the fair omits, but at the Creed.[8]

Addison, however, and his fellow writers, succeeded in making their readers more sensible than they had been of the

[1] *Spectator*, No. 259.
[2] Id. 158.
[3] Id. No. 380.
[4] Id. No. 631.
[5] *Guardian*, No. 41.
[6] Id. No. 65.
[7] Swift's *Works*, viii. 20.
[8] Young's Sixth Satire.

impropriety of all such conduct. The Court, until the time of George the Third, continued to set a bad example in this,[1] as in too many other respects; and it is only within comparatively recent memory that bowing to neighbours in church has been universally given up. But, at all events, during the latter half of the century, the careless and undevout could no longer have ventured without fear of censure on the irreverent familiarities in church which they could have freely indulged in for its first twenty years.[2]

In the early part of the century it seems to have been the unseemly practice of some persons to hurry out of church immediately after the sermon, without waiting for the blessing.[3]

Polwhele remarks that in Truro Church, about the year 1800, he had seen several people sitting with their hats on,[4] as they might have done at Geneva, or in the time of the older Puritans. This, however, was something wholly exceptional at that date. One of the things which had displeased English Churchmen in William the Third was this Dutch habit. He so far yielded to their feeling as to uncover during the prayers, but put on his hat again for the sermon.[5] A minute in the Representation of the Lower House of Convocation, during their session of 1701,[6] shows that this irreverent custom was then not very unfrequent. After all, this was but a very little matter as compared with gross desecrations such as happened here and there in remote country places during the last ten years of the preceding century. 'Amongst the Lambeth archives is a very long letter by Edmund Bowerman, vicar of Codrington, who gives a curious account of his parish. The people played cards on the communion table; and when they met to choose churchwardens, sat with their hats on, smoking and drinking, the clerk gravely saying, with a pipe in his

[1] Thus Gray rallies his friend Mason on his appointment to be chaplain to George II., 1757, that he would have to 'read prayers to the Princess Emily, while she was putting on her dress.'—Gray and Mason's *Correspondence*, 98. Young, preaching at St. James's, was once so moved by the flagrant inattention that he burst into tears while in the pulpit.—Anderson's *Life of Young*, xvii.

[2] The scandalous interruptions during service which C. Simeon met with (1792–5) were, of course, of a different nature.—Simeon's *Memoirs*, 86–92.

[3] *The Beauty of Devotion*, &c. 1715, 34. *The Scourge*, No. 3, 21.

[4] R. Polwhele's Introduction to *Lavington*, ccxliv.

[5] Tindal, vol. i. and *Somers Tracts*, x. 349, quoted in W. Palin's *Hist. of the Ch. of E. from* 1688 *to* 1717, 218.

[6] Quoted in Id. 228.

mouth, that such had been the practice for the last sixty years.'[1] This was in 1692. In 1693, Queen Mary wrote to Dean Hooper that she had been to Canterbury Cathedral for the Sunday morning service, and in the afternoon went to a parish church. 'She heard there a very good sermon, but she thought herself in a Dutch church, for the people stood on the communion table to look at her.'[2]

Throughout the eighteenth century, a variety of secular matters used to be published, sometimes by custom and sometimes by law, during the time of divine service. In a general ignorance of letters, when a paper on the church door would have been an almost useless form, such notices were to a great extent almost necessary. But in themselves they were ill becoming the place and time; and a statute passed in the first year of our present sovereign has now made them illegal.[3] The publication just before the sermon of poor-rate assessment, and of days of appeal in matters of house or window tax,[4] must often have had a very distracting effect upon ratepayers who otherwise might have listened calmly to the arguments and admonitions of their pastor. John Johnson, writing in 1709, remarked with much truth that it was quite scandalous for hue and cries, and enquiries after lost goods, to be published in church.[5] Even in our own generation, Mr. Beresford Hope, telling what he himself remembers, records how in the church he frequented as a boy, the clerk would make such announcements after the repeating of the Nicene Creed, or of meetings at the town hall of the executors of a late duke.[6]

The law of the English Church, in its strict interpretation, scarcely seems to tolerate the idea of variety in ceremonial and modes of worship. In practice it has never for long together merited the imputation of allowing no medium between a strict uniformity and a general confusion of all things.[7] Even before the Reformation it admitted some

[1] Gibson *Papers*, v. 9. Quoted in J. Stoughton's *Church of the Revolution*, 324.
[2] Hooper's MS., quoted by Palin, 220.
[3] Cripps' *Laws of the Church*, 675.
[4] R. Burn's *Eccles. Law*, iii. 273.
[5] Id.
[6] *Worship in the Church of England*, 9.
[7] Jer. Burroughs at the Westminster Conference. Skeat's *Hist. of the Free Churches*, 53.

variety of 'uses;' and since it has been left to its own resources, unhampered by the iron monotony of Rome, it has always allowed, in practice if not in theory, a fairly reasonable scope for those differences of taste and feeling, as well as of thought, which must needs coexist in a church that aspires to be national. No doubt the difficulty of finding a tolerable medium between the two extremes is very considerable; so much so, that the governors of the Church have from time to time made a vigorous effort to insist that one rule, and one rule only, shall in all things be observed. They have never succeeded. Elizabeth attempted it, but wisely desisted before a sort of passive resistance which was more powerful than her own strong will. Laud attempted it, and in the effort brought destruction upon himself, and ruined for the time his cause. The Act of Uniformity attempted it, but it was hardly passed before it was relaxed and widened by accepted glosses and legalised interpretations.

And so it has been, in a greater or less degree, ever since. During the greater part of the eighteenth century there was perhaps, on the whole, a greater general appearance of uniformity within the English Church than had ever been before or has been since. The more advanced High Churchmen had most of them, at the beginning of the period, become Nonjurors, and it was long before their party recovered their strength and energy. The Puritans had been unhappily almost banished for the time from the English Church by the Act of Uniformity. They were suffering, too, from the memory of defeat, and from the reaction which followed upon their reign; so that their party also, so far as it existed at all, was depressed and unpopular. Above all, the spiritual lethargy which for a season stole over the nation, was the bastard counterfeit of general unity and harmony in regard of the externals of worship as well as of the inward doctrines of religion.

It was chiefly in the earlier part of the period that an observer visiting one church after another would have noticed the greatest differences in points of order. Such departures from uniformity were slight as compared to what they had been in the reigns of Elizabeth or Charles the First, yet were sufficient to arouse considerable uneasiness in the

minds of many friends of the Church, as well as to point many sarcasms from some of its opponents. There were some special reasons for disquietude in those who feared to diverge a handbreadth from the established rule. Although since the Restoration, the Church of England was undoubtedly popular, and had acquired, out of the very troubles through which she had passed, a venerable and well-tried aspect, there was, in the earlier part of the eighteenth century, a wide-spread feeling of instability both in ecclesiastical and political matters, to an extent no longer easy to be realised. No one felt sure what Romish and Jacobite machinations might not yet effect. For if the Stuarts remounted the throne, Rome might yet recover ascendancy. The Protestantism of the country was not yet absolutely secure. And therefore many Churchmen who, if they consulted their feelings only, would have been thoroughly in accord with the Laudean divines in their love of a more ornate ritual, were content to stand fast by such simple ceremonies as were everywhere acknowledged to be the rule. However much they might have a right to claim, as their legitimate due, usages which their rubrics seemed to authorise, and which were scarcely unfrequent even in the days of Heylyn and Cosin, they were not disposed to insist upon what would in their day be considered as innovations in the direction of Rome. Better to widen that breach rather than in any way to lessen it. So too with men of a different tone of mind, who, so far as their own tastes went, disliked all ceremonial and thought it rather an impediment than a help to devotion, and who would have been glad if the Church of England had approximated more closely to the habits of Presbyterians and Independents. They, too, in the early part of the last century felt for the most part, they must be cautious, if they would be loyal to the communion to which they had yielded allegiance. If they indulged in Presbyterian fancies, they might perchance bring in the Presbyterians, an exchange which they were not the least prepared to make. The Dutch propensities of William, the ratification of Scotch Presbyterianism in the reign of Anne, the frequent alarm cry of Church in danger, made it seem quite possible that if civil dissensions should arise, Presbyterianism

might yet lift up its head and find a wealthier home in the deaneries and rectories of England. And so they were more inclined to control their sympathies in that direction than they might have been under other circumstances. It may be added, the extreme vehemence, not to say virulence of party feeling, in ecclesiastical as in political matters, which prevailed in England so long as a decisive and universally recognised settlement was yet in suspense, obliged both High and Low Churchmen to keep tolerably close to the strict letter of the Act of Uniformity. When so much jealousy and mutual animosity were abroad, neither the one nor the other could venture, without raising a storm of opprobrium, to test to what extreme limits its utmost elasticity could be strained.

Notwithstanding such considerations, differences in religious opinion within the Church, especially as to those points which the Puritan controversy had brought into prominence, did not fail to find expression in the modes and usages of worship. Something has been already said on this point, in speaking of the furniture of churches, the decoration of the sanctuary, and the observance of fasts and festivals. What has now to be added relates rather to varieties in the manner of conducting services.

The rubric which occupies so prominent a place in our Prayer-book, stating 'that such ornaments of the Church and of the Ministers thereof, at all times of their ministration, shall be retained and be in use, as were in the Church of England, by the authority of Parliament, in the second year of the reign of King Edward VI.,' was of course not forgotten—as indeed it could not be—in the eighteenth century. High Churchmen not unfrequently called attention to it. John Johnson, writing in 1709, said he was by no means single in his belief that this order was still legally enjoined.[1] Archbishop Sharp appears to have been of the same opinion, and used to say that he preferred the Communion office as it was in King Edward's Book.[2] Nicholls, in his edition (1710) of Bishop Cosin's annotated Prayer-book, insisted upon the continuous legality of the vestments prescribed in the old rubric, which was 'the existing law,' he said, 'still in force

[1] J. Johnson's *Vade Mecum*, i. 21.

[2] *Life of Archbishop Sharp*, by his Son, i. 355.

at this day.'[1] Bishop Gibson, the learned author of the 'Codex Juris Ecclesiastici' (1711), although he marked the rubric as practically obsolete, steadily maintained that legally the ornaments of ministers in performing Divine Service were the same as they had been in the earlier Liturgy.[2] In Charles I.'s reign the rubric had been by no means obsolete. The use of the cope as an Eucharistic vestment had been sanctioned by Bishop Andrewes, Bishop Cosin, Archbishop Williams, and probably by other prelates, and was used not only in some cathedrals, and in some College Chapels, but also in some of the London Churches. 'Ministering the Sacrament in copes,' had been joined in the same indictment with reading the Communion service at the Lord's Table, beautifying churches with painted glass, and preaching in surplices and hoods, in the Puritan prosecution of various London vicars in 1660.[3] But after the Restoration the use of the more ornate vestments was not revived. Norwich, Westminster, and Durham seem to have been the only exceptions. At Norwich, however, the cope, presented by the High Sheriff of Norfolk in the place of one that had been burnt during the Civil Wars,[4] does not appear to have been much worn. Those at Westminster were reserved for great state occasions, such as Coronations and Royal funerals.[5] It was only at Durham that the cope was constantly used on all festival days. Defoe wrote in 1727 that they were still worn by some of the residents, and he then described them as 'rich with embroidery and embossed work of silver, that indeed it was a kind of load to stand under them.'[6] A story is sometimes told of Warburton, when Prebendary of Durham in 1759, throwing off his cope in a pet, and never wearing it again, because it disturbed his wig.[7] Their use does not seem to have been totally discontinued until 1784.[8]

The surplice was of course, throughout the period, the

[1] B. Hope, *Worship*, &c., 109, 129.

[2] Gibson's *Codex Jur. Eccl.* 363, 472. This opinion is referred to with approval in *An Account of London Parishes*, &c.

[3] Heylin's *Cyprian. Anglic.*, quoted by B. Hope, *Worship*, &c., 126.

[4] Blomefield's *Hist. of Norwich*, quoted in Id. 140.

[5] A. P. Stanley's *Memoirs of Westminster Abbey*, 192.

[6] Defoe's *Tour*, 1727, iii. 189, also Thoresby's *Diary*, i. 60.

[7] B. Hope, *Worship*, &c., 138. [8] *Gent. Mag.* for 1804, quoted in Id.

universally recognised vestment of the Church of England clergy. Not that it had altogether outlived the unreasoning hatred with which it was regarded by ultra-Protestants outside the National Church. It was still in the earlier part of the century inveighed against by some of their writers as 'a Babylonish garment,'[1] 'a rag of the whore of Babylon,'[2] a 'habit of the priests of Isis.'[3] In William III.'s time, its use in the pulpit was evidently quite exceptional. The writer of a letter in the Strype Correspondence—one of those in whose eyes a surplice was 'a fool's coat'—making mention that on the previous day (in 1696) he had seen a minister preach in one, added that to the best of his remembrance he had never but once seen this before.[4] During the next reign the custom was more common, but was looked upon as a decided mark of High Churchmanship. There is an expressive, and amusingly inconsequential 'though' in the following note from Thoresby's Diary for June 17, 1722: 'Mr. Rhodes preached well (though in his surplice.)'[5] In villages, however, it was very frequently worn, not so much from any idea of its propriety as what Pasquin in the Tatler is made to call 'the most conscientious dress,'[6] but simply from its being the only vestment provided by the parish. Too frequently it betrayed in its appearance, 'dirty and contemptible with age,'[7] a careless indifference quite in keeping with other externals of worship. At the end of the seventeenth century many Low Church clergy were wont so far to violate the Act of Uniformity as often not to wear the surplice at all in church. They would sometimes wear it, said South, in a sermon preached in King William's reign, and oftener lay it aside.[8] Such irregularities appear, however, to have been nearly discontinued in Queen Anne's time.[9] About

[1] *The Scourge*, by T. Lewis, Feb. 11, 1717.
[2] Sherlock, *On Public Worship*, 114. [3] *The Scourge*, May 16, 1717.
[4] Quoted in Stoughton's *Church of the Revolution*, 323.
[5] R. Thoresby's *Diary*, ii. 341. [6] *Tatler*, No. 129.
[7] Secker's *Eight Charges*, 182.
[8] R. South's *Sermons*, iv. 191, also Strype *Corresp.* quoted by Stoughton, *Ch. of the Rev.*, 323.
[9] Mr. Wordsworth, however, mentions a portrait of 1730, showing the interior of an English Church in which the celebrant at the Eucharist is robed in a black gown.—*Univ. Soc. in the Eighteenth Cent.*, 533.

this date, the growing habit among clergymen of wearing a wig is said to have caused an alteration from the older form of the surplice. It was no longer sewn up and drawn over the head, but made open in front.[1]

Those who abominated the surplice had looked with aversion on the academical hood. Even in the middle of the eighteenth century, some Low Church clergymen—they would hardly be graduates of either University—objected to its use. Christopher Pitt, recommending preachers to sort their sermons to their hearers, bids them, for example, not to be so indiscreet as to 'rail at hoods and organs at St. Paul's.'[2]

Next, says Addison, after the clergy of the highest rank, such as bishops, deans, and archdeacons, come 'doctors of divinity, prebendaries and all that wear scarfs.'[3] It was an object therefore of some ambition in his day to wear a scarf. There was many a clerical fop, we are told in a later paper of the 'Spectator,' who would wear it when he came up to London, that he might be mistaken for a dignitary of the Church, and be called 'doctor' by his landlady and by the waiter at Child's Coffee-house.[4] Noblemen also claimed a right of conferring a scarf upon their chaplains. In this case, those who knew the galling yoke that a chaplaincy too often was, might well entitle it 'a badge of servitude,' and 'a silken livery.'[5]

At this point, a short digression may be permitted on the subject of clerical dress during the last century.

In the time of Swift and the 'Spectator,' clergymen generally wore their gowns when they travelled in the streets of London.[6] But they wore them, so Hearne says, with a difference, very characteristic of those days of hot party strife. The Tory clergy only wore the M.A. gown; 'the Whigs and enemies of the Universities go in pudding-sleeve gowns,'[7] or what was otherwise called the 'crape' or 'mourning gown.' In the country the correct clerical dress was simply the cassock. Fielding's genius has made good Parson Adams a familiar

[1] Walcot's *Cathedrals*, &c., 121.

[2] Christopher Pitt's *Art of Preaching*, c. 1740. Anderson's *Br. Poets*, viii. 821.

[3] *Spectator*, No. 21.

[4] Id. No. 609.

[5] Id., and Oldham, in *The Tatler*, No. 255.

[6] Swift's 'Project for the Adv. of Rel.'—*Works*, ix. 97. *Spectator*, No. 609.

[7] Hearne's *Reliq.*, Feb. 1719–20, quoted in Chr. Wordsworth, *Univ. Soc. in Eighteenth Century*, 36, 516.

picture to most readers of English literature. We picture him careless of appearances, tramping along the muddy lanes with his cassock tucked up under his short great-coat.[1] A clergyman, writing in 1722, upon 'the hardships and miseries of the inferior clergy in and about London,' compares with some bitterness the threadbare garments of the curate with 'the flaming gown and cassock' of the non-resident rector. He could wish, he said ('if the wish were canonical')[2] that he might appear in a common habit rather than in a clerical garb, which only excited derision by its squalor. He thought it a desirable recommendation to the religious and charitable societies of the day, that they should make gifts to the poorer clergy of new gowns and cassocks.[3] Soon, however, after Fielding's time, the cassock gradually fell into disuse as an ordinary part of a clergyman's dress. It was still worn by many throughout the Sunday; but on week days, was regarded as somewhat stiff and formal, even by those who insisted most on the proprieties.[4] Ever since the Restoration, the old strictness about clerical dress had become more and more relaxed. The square cap had been out of favour during the Commonwealth, and was not generally resumed.[5] The canonical skull cap was next supplanted—not without much scandal to persons of grave and staid habits—by the fashionable peruke.[6] There is a letter from the Duke of Monmouth, then Chancellor of Cambridge, to the Vice-Chancellor and University, October 8, 1674, in which this innovation is severely condemned.[7] A few years later, Archbishop Tillotson himself set the example of wearing the obnoxious article.[8] Many country incumbents not only

[1] Fielding's *Joseph Andrews*, b. i. ch. 16, b. ii. ch. 3, 7, &c.

[2] Cf. C. Churchill's *Independence*:—

> 'O'er a brown cassock which had once been black,
> Which hung in tatters o'er his brawny back.'

[3] *Hardships, &c., of the Inf. Clergy*, in a letter to the Bishop of London, 1722, 20, 93, 246.

[4] *Admonition to the Younger Clergy*, 1764, and *Philagoretes on the Pulpit*, &c., quoted by Chr. Wordsworth, *Universities*, &c., 526, 529.

[5] J. C. Jeaffreson's *B. of the Clergy*, ii. 253.

[6] *Mrs. Abigail, &c., with some Free Thoughts on the Pretended Dignity of the Clergy*, 1700.

[7] Quoted in *Justice and Necessity of Restraining the Clergy*, &c., 1715, 41.

[8] Jeaffreson, ii. 251.

dropped all observance of the old canonical regulations, but lowered the social character of their profession by making themselves undistinguishable in outward appearance from farmers or common graziers. South spoke of this in one of his sermons, preached towards the end of William III.'s reign.[1] So also did Swift in 1731.[2] The Dean, however, himself seems to have been a glaring offender against that sobriety of garb which befits a clergyman. In his journal to Stella, he speaks in one place of wearing 'a light camlet, faced with red velvet and silver buckles.'[3] Of course eccentricities which Dean Swift allowed himself must not be taken as examples of what others ventured upon. But carelessness in all such matters went on increasing till about the seventh decade of the century. After that time a number of remonstrances and protests may be found against the brown coats, the plaid or white waistcoats, the white stockings, the leathern breeches, the scratch wigs, and so forth, in which clerical fops on the one hand, and clerical slovens on the other, were often wont to appear.[4] A writer at the very end of the century pointed his remarks on the subject by calling the attention of his brother clergy to the distinctly anti-Christian purpose which had animated the French Convention in their suppression of the clerical habit.[5]

Mention of copes, surplices, and hoods led by a natural transition to the use in ordinary week-day life of the gown and cassock, and so to some general remarks upon clerical costume in the last century. The subject, however, from which this was a digression related to the order of worship in parish churches. To this we return.

If a modern Churchman could be carried back to the days of Queen Anne, and were at Church while service was going on, his eye would probably be caught by people standing up where he had been accustomed to see them sitting, and sitting down when, in our congregations, every one would be standing

[1] R. South's *Sermons*, vol. iv. 192. [2] Dean Swift's *Works*, vol. viii. 313.

[3] Chap. iii., p. 26, quoted in A. Andrews' *Eighteenth Cent.*

[4] Secker's Charge of 1762—*Eight Charges*, 1769, 262. Tucker's 'Letter to Dr. Kippis,' 1773—*Works*, i. 23. T. Pennant's *Literary Life*, &c., 1793, p. 21, of date 1774. Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, iv. 45. Also some pamphlets of 1765, quoted by Chr. Wordsworth, *Univ. Life*, &c., 529, and Mrs. Montagu's account (1745) of her call on the Vicar of Tunbridge in Dr. Doran's *A Lady of the Last Century*, 46.

[5] *Considerations Addressed to the Clergy*, 1798, 14.

up. Some people, following the common custom of the Puritans, stood during the prayer.[1] Some, on the other hand, sat during the creed.[2] In both these cases there was plain neglect of the rubric. Where the Prayer-book was silent, uncertainty and variation of usage were more reasonable. Thus some stood at the Epistle, as well as at the Gospel,[3] and some whenever the second lesson was from one of the Evangelists.[4] What Cowper calls 'the divorce of knees from hassocks,' was perhaps not so frequent then as now.[5] In pictures of church interiors of that date, the congregation is generally represented as really kneeling. Still, it was much too frequent, and quite fell in with the careless, self-indulgent habits of the time. Before the middle of the century it had become very general. In one of the papers of the 'Tatler,' we find there were some who neither stood nor knelt, but remained lazily sitting throughout the service like 'an audience at a playhouse.'[6] Sitting while the Psalms were being sung was, notwithstanding many remonstrances, the rule rather than the exception during the earlier part of the century. The Puritan commission of 1641 had spoken of standing at the hymns as an innovation.[7] Even Sherlock, in 1681, speaks of 'that universal practice of sitting while we sing the Psalms.'[8] In 1717, Fleetwood speaks of standing at such times as if it were a singularity rather than otherwise.[9] Hickes, on the other hand, writes in 1701, as if those who refused to stand at the singing of psalms and anthems were for the most part 'stiff, morose, and saturnine votists.'[10] In fact, High Churchmen

[1] *Spectator*, No. 455. Burnet, as a matter of opinion, thought this more consonant with primitive usage, and, except during confession, more expressive of the feelings of faith and confidence, *Four Discourses*, &c., 1694, 323.

[2] *The Scourge*, 1720, No. 3.

[3] Cruttwell's *Life of Bishop Wilson*, 12; and Fleetwood's 'Letter to an Inhabitant of St. Andrew's, Holborn,' 1717—*Works*, 1737, 722-3. [4] Id.

[5] Towards the end of the century, on the other hand, there were many Churches where kneeling was sufficiently uncommon as almost to call special attention. Thus Admiral Austen was remarked upon as '*the* officer who kneeled at Church.' (Jane Austen's *Memoirs*, 23); and C. Simeon writes in his *Diary*, '1780, March 8. Kneeled down before service; nor do I see any impropriety in it. Why should I be afraid or ashamed of all the world seeing me do my duty (*Memoirs*, 19).

[6] *Tatler*, No. 241. [7] J. Hunt, *Relig. Thought in England*, i. 197.

[8] Sherlock *On Public Worship*, 1681, ii. ch. 2.

[9] Fleetwood's *Works*, 1737, 723.

[10] G. Hickes, *Devotions*, &c., second ed., 1701, Pref.

insisted on the one posture, while Low Churchmen generally preferred the other; and so the custom remained very variable, until the High Church reaction of Queen Anne's time succeeded in establishing, in this particular, a rule which was henceforth generally recognised. In 1741, Secker speaks of sitting during the singing as if, though common enough, it were still a mere careless habit.[1]

At the beginning of the century many who had been brought up in Puritan traditions thoroughly disliked the custom of congregational responses. They called it 'a tossing of tennis balls,'[2] and set it down as one of the points of formalism.[3] Partly, perhaps, from a little of this sort of feeling, but far more often for no other reason than a lack of devotional spirit, that cold and most unattractive custom, which prevailed throughout the Georgian age, of making the clerk the mouthpiece of the congregation, fast gained ground. This, however, was much less general in the earlier part of the period than at its close. In Queen Anne's time there were many zealous Churchmen who both by word and example endeavoured to give a more hearty character to the public worship, and who thought that such 'unconcerned silence'[4] was a much greater evil than the risk of an occasional 'Stentor who bellowed terribly loud in the responses.'[5] Most people are familiar with the paper in the 'Spectator,' which describes Sir Roger de Coverley at church, and his patriarchal care that his tenants and dependents should all have prayer-books that they might duly take their part in the service.[6] It is noticeable that in the last decade of the century none spoke more appreciatively of the grandeur of true congregational worship than a Nonconformist writer. After saying how desirable it was that the people themselves should have a large share in religious services, Mrs. Barbauld proceeds to give her idea of what such a service ought to be. 'As we have never seen, perhaps we could hardly conceive, the effect which the united voices of a whole congregation, all in the lively expression of one feeling, would have upon

[1] Second Charge, 1741, Secker's *Eight Charges*, 1769.
[2] T. Bisse, *The Beauty of Holiness*, eighth ed. 1721, 50, note.
[3] J. Watts, 'Miscellaneous Thoughts'—*Works*, ix. 380.
[4] *Tatler*, No. 241. [5] *Spectator*, No. 112. [6] Id. No. 54.

the mind. We should then perceive not only that we were doing the same thing in the same place, but that we were doing it with one accord. The deep silence of listening expectation, the burst of united praises, the solemn pauses that invite reflection, the varied tones of humiliation, gratitude and persuasion, would swell and melt the heart by turns.'[1]

The generation that followed the Revolution of 1689 was not a time when minor questions of ritual, upon which there was difference of opinion between the two principal parties in the English Church, were likely to rest in peace. Turning eastward at the creeds was a case in point. There was quite a literature upon the subject. Many Low Churchmen, among whom may be mentioned Asplin, Hoadly, and Lord Chancellor King, contended that it was a papal or pagan superstition which ought to be wholly discontinued. The High Church writers, such as Cave, Meade, Bingham, Smallbroke, Whiston, Wesley, and Bisse, answered that it was not only the universal custom in the primitive Church, but edifying and impressive in itself as meaning to signify unity in the faith, hope of resurrection, and expectation of our Saviour's coming. The usage was very generally maintained. Asplin, who warmly opposed it, writing about 1728, said that it was a practice 'much more popular than rational,' and 'countenanced by not a few of the reverend fathers of our Church.'[2] And he complained, certainly not without reason, that a minister who disapproved of such ceremonies, though he were ever such a legitimate and dutiful son of the Church of England, should be looked upon 'by one half of his parish, and almost all his brethren' much as though he were a Dissenter.[3] Later in the century the custom appears to have become somewhat less general.

The injunction of the 17th Canon, to bow with reverence when the name of the Lord Jesus is mentioned in time of divine service, was observed much as now. In the recital of the Creed it was the general custom. At other times, High Churchmen were for the most part careful to observe the

[1] A. L. Barbauld's *Works*, ii. 460.

[2] W. Asplin, *Alkibla*, 1721–31, Pref. viii.

[3] Id. 111. Also Bisse's *Beauty of Holiness*, 68, 100, 114. *The Scourge*, No. 3. Cruttwell's *Life of Wilson*, 12. *Somers Tracts*, xii. 101.

practice,[1] and Low Churchmen did not. Later in the century the canon was probably observed much more generally in country villages than among town congregations. Bisse observed that it was a primitive usage which ought least of all to be dropped at a time when Arian opinions were abroad.[2]

The ordinary, prescribed form of public worship in the English Church is scarcely susceptible of variation. It is impossible to estimate how much, in the last as in the present century, the National Church has been indebted for its stability and general unity to a liturgy which all parties use in common, and which all have almost equally loved. The highest of Queen Anne's High Churchmen, the most Latitudinarian among those who quoted Tillotson and talked of 'Moderation;' the few Puritans who lingered here and there in Eastern county parsonages, feeling that they had outlived the age to which their sympathies belonged; the thousands who declaimed against enthusiasm as the greatest of religious evils, and the scanty handful who retreated into themselves and found delight in mystic contemplation; the stiffly orthodox, and the reputed heretic; the Calvinist and the Arminian; the Methodist clergyman, and those whom the very name of Wesley or Whitefield excited into fury; the earnest and conscientious, and the lax and idle;—whatever might be the opinions, temperament, habits of the officiating clergyman, he, at all events, could not alter the Prayer-book words. If a form of prayer, such as that which the English Church possesses, is a preservative against fanaticism and extravagance, it is certainly not less valuable in a time of spiritual languor. It is not only a continued protest against the lowered tone of religious feeling, but it is a means through which the Church retains its hold in such an age upon the love and reverence of its worthiest members, and through which, when the interval of depression has passed by, it may quickly recover itself, without bearing any lasting trace of its late unnerved condition.

At the close of the seventeenth century we find South and others bitterly complaining of the liberties taken with the

[1] Bingham's *Works*, ix. 259. Cruttwell, 12. Walcot, 204. *Somers Tracts*, ix. 507. Watts' *Works*, ix. 380. Wakefield's *Memoirs*, 156. *The Scourge*, No. 3.

[2] Bisse, *Beauty of Holiness*, 145.

Prayer-book by some of the 'Moderate' clergy. Some prayers, it appears, were omitted, and some were shortened, and in one form or another 'the divine service so curtailed,' says South in his exaggerated way, 'as if the people were to have but the tenths from the priest, for the tenths he had received from them.'[1] No doubt the expectation of immediate changes in the liturgy, and the knowledge that some of the bishops were leaders in that movement, had an unsettling effect, adapted to encourage irregularities. At all events we hear little more of it, when the agitation in favour of comprehension had ceased. There was often a lax observance of the rubrics;[2] but there appear to be no complaints of any serious omissions, until three or four of the Arian and semi-Arian clergy ventured, not only to leave out the Athanasian Creed, but to alter the doxologies,[3] and[4] to pass over the second and third petitions of the Litany.[4]

The Athanasian Creed, however, might fairly be said to stand on a somewhat different footing. If it had been a pain and a stumbling-block only to those who had adopted Whiston's opinions about the Trinity, men to whom the ordinary prayers could not fail to give offence, it would have been clear that such persons had no standing-ground in the ministry of the Church of England. But the case was notoriously otherwise. Persons who have not the least inclination to adopt heterodox opinions, may most reasonably object to the use in public worship of elaborate scholastic definitions on questions of acknowledged mystery. Those clergymen, therefore, whether in the eighteenth or in the nineteenth century, who have been accustomed to neglect the rubric which prescribes the use of this Creed on certain days, might feel reasonably justified in so doing, on the tacit understanding that, at the demand of the bishop they should either read the formula, notwithstanding their general dislike to it, or give up their office in the Church. No doubt it was quite as

[1] South's *Works*, iv. 191.

[2] Lathbury's *Hist. of the Nonjurors*, 156, 507–8. Parry's *Hist. of the Ch. of E.*, iii. 165.

[3] This gave occasion to a special pastoral letter of the Bishop of London, Dec. 26, 1718.

[4] Whiston's *Memoirs*, at date 1720, 249.

often omitted in the last century as in our own;[1] and in George III.'s time, even if a desire had existed to enforce its use, there would have been the more difficulty in doing so from its having been forbidden in the King's Chapel.[2]

The habit of reading continuously, as parts of one service, Morning Prayer, the Litany, and part of the office for the Communion, had hardly become fixed at the commencement of the century. John Johnson,[3] writing in 1709, said it was an innovation. The old custom had been to have, on Sundays and holy days, prayers at six, and the Litany at nine, followed after a few minutes' interval by the Communion service. Even in Charles I.'s time they had often become joined, as a concession to the later hours that were gradually gaining ground, or, as Heylin expressed it, 'because of the sloth of the people.' But 'long after the Restoration' the distinction was maintained in some places, as in the Cathedrals of Canterbury and Worcester. And throughout the last century, 'Second Service' was a name in common general use for the Communion office.[4]

Bull, Sherlock, Beveridge, and other Anglican divines, who belong more to the seventeenth than to the eighteenth century, had expressed much concern at the unfrequency of celebrations of the Eucharist as compared with a former age. Our Reformers, they said, had regarded it as an ordinary part of Christian worship.[5] In the first Prayer-book of Edward VI. there had been express directions relating to a daily administration, not only in cathedrals, but in parish churches. But now, said Beveridge, people have so departed from primitive usage that they think once a week is too often.[6] It had come to be monthly or perhaps quarterly. The Puritans, with the idea that the solemnity of the rite was

[1] Thus we find Dr. Parr speaking of 'reviving' its use in his parish. Johnstone's 'Life of Parr'—*Q. Rev.* 39, 268. Expressions of dislike to parts of it among Churchmen are very numerous throughout the century.

[2] Barbauld's *Works*, by Aikin, ii. 151. Bishop Watson's *Life*, i. 395.

[3] J. Johnson, *Clergyman's Vade Mecum*, i. 12, and Heylin (*Hist.* pl. ii. cap. 4) quoted by him.

[4] T. Bisse, *Beauty of Holiness*, 123. C. Cruttwell's *Life of Bishop Wilson*, 265 (in the Isle of Man, First and Second Services are the regular terms used in official ecclesiastical notices). *London Parishes*, 8.

[5] Sherlock *On Public Worship*, 1681, 205, 219.

[6] Beveridge *On Frequent Communion*, 155, 173.

enhanced by its recurring after comparatively lengthened intervals, discouraged frequent communions, and many Low Churchmen of the next generation held the same opinion.[1] In the country, quarterly communions had become the general rule. The number of communicants had also very much diminished. No doubt this was owing in great measure to the general laxity which followed upon the Restoration. But the cause already mentioned contributed to keep away even religious people. It must be also remembered that, during the period of the Reformation, and for some time after, stated attendance at the Holy Communion was regarded not only as a religious duty, but as an ordinary sign of membership in the National Church, and of attachment to its principles. Towards the end of the seventeenth century, although the odious sacramental test was yet to survive for many a long year, that feeling had very generally passed away, and was being gradually superseded in many minds by an opposite idea that this Sacrament was not so much a help to Christian living, as a badge, from which many excellent people shrunk, of decided religious profession. With the rise of the religious societies there was a change for the better. The High Church movement of Queen Anne's time, regarded in its worthiest form and among its best representatives, was one in which the sacramental element was prominently marked. If a comparison is made between the number of churches in London where the Sacrament was weekly administered in Queen Anne's reign, and on the other hand, in any period from about the middle of George I.'s reign to the third or fourth decade of the present century, the difference would be strikingly in favour of the earlier date. In 1741, we find Secker admonishing the clergy of the diocese of Oxford, that they were bound to administer thrice in the year, that there ought to be an administration during the long interval between Whitsuntide and Christmas. 'And if,' he adds somewhat dubiously, 'you can afterwards advance from a quarterly communion to a monthly one, I make no doubt but you will.'[2] Of course there were many verbal and many practical protests against the prevalent disregard of this central Christian ordinance. Thus

[1] Fleetwood for example, 'Charge to the Ely Clergy,' 1716—*Works*, 1737, 699.

[2] Secker's *Eight Charges*, 63.

both Wesley from a High Church point of view, and the Broad Church author of the 'Free and Candid Disquisitions,' urged the propriety of weekly celebrations. And before the end of the century there was doubtless some improvement. In many parish churches the general custom of a quarterly administration was broken through in favour of a monthly one, and in many cathedrals the Sacrament might once more be received on every Lord's Day.[1] But Bishop Tomline might well feel it a matter for just complaint, that being at St. Paul's on Easter Day, 1800, 'in that vast and noble cathedral no more than six persons were found at the table of the Lord.'[2] Before leaving this part of the subject, it should be added that, previous to the time when the Methodist organisation became unhappily separated from the National Church, the sermons of Wesley and his preachers were sometimes followed by a large accession of communicants at the parish church.[3]

Kneeling to receive the Sacrament had been one of the principal scruples felt by the Presbyterians at the time when the great majority of them were anxious for comprehension within the National Church. Archbishop Tillotson, acting upon his well-known saying, 'Charity is above rubrics,' and in accordance with the practice of some of the Elizabethan divines, was wont to authorise by his example a considerable discretion on this point.[4] Bishop Patrick, on the other hand, though no less earnest in his advocacy of comprehension, did not feel justified in departing from prescribed order, and when Du Moulin desired to receive the Sacrament from him, declined, 'not without many kind remarks,' to administer to him without his kneeling.[5] After all schemes of comprehension had fallen through, the concession in question became very unfrequent. A pamphleteer of 1709 speaks doubtfully as to whether it still occurred or not.[6] A greater licence in regard

[1] E. C. M. Walcot's *Customs of Cathedrals*, 101.

[2] Quoted in *The Church of England Vindicated*, &c., 1801, 5.

[3] *Two Letters concerning the Methodists*, by the Rev. Moore Booker, 1751, Pref. iv.

[4] Burnet's Funeral Sermon on Tillotson, quoted in Lathbury's *Nonjurors*, 156.

[5] Du Moulin's *Sober and Dispassionate Reply*, &c. 1680, 32.

[6] *The Church of England's Complaint against the Irregularities of some of the Clergy*, 1709, 15.

of posture was one of the suggestions of the 'Free and Candid Disquisitions.'

Through the Georgian period, a negligent habit was by no means unusual of reading the early part of the Communion service from the reading desk. Dr. Parr, in 1785, speaking of the changes he had introduced into his church at Hatton, evidently thought himself very correct in 'Communion service at the altar.'[1]

Even in Bishop Bull's time the offertory was very much neglected in country places.[2] Later in the century its disuse became more general. There were one or two parishes in his diocese, Secker said, where the old custom was retained of oblations for the support of the church and alms for the poor. But often there was no offertory at all: he hoped it might be revived and duly administered.[3]

Some remarks have already been made upon the traces which were to be found in a few exceptional instances, during the eighteenth century, of the Eucharistic vestments as appointed in Edward VI.'s Prayer-book.

The sacramental 'usages,' so called, belong to the history of the Nonjurors rather than to that of the National Church. There was, however, no time when the theological and ecclesiastical opinions prevalent among the Nonjurors did not find favour among a few English Conformists, lay and clerical. Thus, the mixture of water with the wine, in conformity with Eastern practice, and in remembrance of the water and the blood, seems to have been occasionally found in parish churches. Hicks said he had found it to be the custom at Barking.[4] Wesley also, and the early Oxford Methodists, approved of it.[5]

In the early part of the seventeenth century George Herbert had said that the country parson must see that on

[1] J. Johnstone's *Life of Dr. Parr*, qu. in *Q. Rev.*, 39, 268.

[2] R. Nelson's *Life of Bull*, 52.

[3] Charge of 1741—Secker's *Eight Charges*, 63.

[4] C. Leslie's 'Letter about the New Separation'—*Works*, i. 510. He adds that some clergymen of the Ch. of E. always used unleavened bread at the Sacrament.

[5] L. Tyerman's *Oxford Methodists*, Pref. vi. Other allusions to an occasional preference for this usage occur in Bishop Horne's *Works*, App. 203, and *Gent. Mag.* 1750, xx. 75.

great festivals his Church was 'perfumed with incense' and stuck with boughs.'[1] Even as late as George III.'s reign it appears that incense was not quite unknown in the English Church. We are told that on the principal holy days it used to be the 'constant practice at Ely to burn incense on the altar at the Cathedral, till Thomas Green, one of the prebendaries, and now (1779) Dean of Salisbury, a finical man, who is always taking snuff, objected to it, under pretence that it made his head to ache.'[2]

The hymnody of the period has formed part of the subject of another chapter. But sacred hymnody is not by any means synonymous with Church music. If the rhythmical versions of the Psalms had been ever so worthy of the original, or if the most beautiful of the hymns in which the latter half of the century was prolific, had been generally received into the public worship, very much would still have been wanting to redeem the musical part of the service from the miserable condition into which it had fallen. Everybody whose memory can go only so far as thirty or forty years back will have a tolerably clear idea of what the music of the English Church had been for some hundred and fifty years previously. But at no time within living memory was it at its lowest ebb. Before the end of the last century some improvement had been effected in rendering it somewhat more hearty and congregational than it had been. The 'Evangelicals' were not always very particular about the externals of public worship. But wherever there was anything like revival of religious earnestness, it was impossible that people could remain contented with 'that shameful mode of psalmody almost confined to the wretched solo of a parish clerk, or to a few persons huddled together in one corner of the Church, who sung to the praise and glory of themselves, for the entertainment, and oftener to the weariness of the congregation.'[3] Church music was probably at its worst about the time of the first two Georges,—an interval when there was no longer the same movement in Church matters as there had been in Queen Anne's reign, and when the indirect influences of the Methodist revival were

[1] Herbert's *Country Parson*, quoted in Brand's *Popular Antiquities*, i. 521.
[2] Walcot's *Customs of Cathedrals*, 137.
[3] T. Haweis, *Carmina Christo*, 1792, Pref.

not yet widely felt. A writer in the 'Spectator' had discovered one great merit in English sacred music. It was modest, he said, and thoughtful, not sensuous and pompous, as in many foreign Churches.[1] Readers of the paper might have been inclined to smile at this encomium. Yet there was truth in it, however flatteringly expressed. At all events, when the choirs of the rural villages and provincial towns began to affect airs and graces[2] to which they had hitherto made no pretensions, the change was certainly for the worse.

The bad case into which Church music had fallen was much owing to those worthy men, the Parish Clerks. These officials were a great institution in the English Church of the last century. The Parish Clerks of London, from whom all their brethren in the country borrowed some degree of lustre, were an ancient and honourable company. They had been incorporated by Henry III. as 'The Brotherhood of St. Nicolas.' Their Charter had been renewed by Charles I., who conferred upon them additional privileges and immunities, under the name of 'The Warden and Fellowship of Parish Clerks of the City and Suburbs of London and the Liberties thereof, the City of Westminster, the Borough of Southwark, and the fifteen Parishes adjacent.'[3] They had a Hall of their own in Bishopsgate Street; at St. Alban's Church they had their anniversary sermon; at St. Bridget's they had maintained, until about the end of the seventeenth century, a 'music-sermon' on St. Cecilia's day;[4] and Clerkenwell derives its name from the solemn Mystery Plays which their guild in old days used to celebrate near the holy spring.[5] There were certain taverns about the Exchange where they met as a kind of Club, 'men with grave countenances, short wigs, black clothes or dark camlet trimmed with black.'[6] In pre-Reformation days they had ranked among the minor orders of the Church as assistants of the Priests;[7] and so, especially in country churches, they might consider themselves as holding a position somewhat analogous, though on a humbler scale, to that of Precentors. In 1722 a clergyman, writing to the Bishop of London on the subject of the poverty

[1] *Spectator*, No. 630.
[2] *Tatler*, No. 61, *Spectator*, No. 205, Pope's *Dunciad*, iv. 56-60.
[3] *London Parishes*, &c., 20. [4] Paterson's *Pietas Londinensis*, 52. [5] Id. 104.
[6] *Spectator*, No. 372. [7] H. W. Cripp's *Law of the Church*, &c., 218.

and distressed condition of some of the poorer curates, spoke of the desirability of again admitting men in holy orders to be Parish Clerks. Early in the present century Hartley Coleridge made a somewhat similar suggestion. 'How often in town and country do we hear our divine Liturgy rendered wholly ludicrous by all imaginable tones, twangs, drawls, mouthings, wheezings, gruntings, snuffles and quid-rollings, by all diversities of dialect, cacologies and cacophonies, by twistings, contortions and consolidations of visage, squintings and blinkings and upcastings of eyes. . . . Then, too, the discretion assumed by these Hogarthic studies of selecting the tune and verses to be sung makes the psalmody, instead of an integral and affecting portion of the service, as distracting and irrational an episode as the jigs and country dances scraped between the acts of a tragedy.'[1] There would be no difficulty, he thought, in getting educated persons to discharge the office for little remuneration or none, if it were not for the troublesome and often disagreeable parish business annexed to the office. As it was, the Clerk occupied a very odd position, uniting the menial duties of a useful Church servant to other functions, the decent performance of which was utterly beyond the range of an illiterate man. Many of our readers may be acquainted with the witty satire in which, with a perpetual side glance at the fussy self-importance visible in Bishop Burnet's History, Pope writes 'the Memoirs of P. P., Clerk of this Parish.' With what delightful complacency this diligent representative of his class speaks of taking rank among 'men right worthy of their calling, of a clear and sweet voice, and of becoming gravity'—of his place in the congregation at the feet of the Priest,—of his raising the Psalm,—of his arraying the ministers with the surplice,—of his responsible part in the service of the Church! 'Remember, Paul, I said to myself, thou standest before men of high worship, the wise Mr. Justice Freeman, the grave Mr. Justice Tonson, the good Lady Jones, and the two virtuous gentlewomen her daughters, nay the great Sir Thomas Truby, knight and baronet, and my young master the Squire who shall one day be lord of this manor.' With what magisterial gravity he descants of

[1] Hartley Coleridge, *Essays and Marginalia*, ii. 338.

whipping out the dogs, 'except the sober lap-dog of the good widow Howard,'—tearing away the children's half-eaten apples, smoothing the dog's ears of the great Bible! How he prides himself in sweeping and trimming weekly the pews and benches, which were formerly swept but once in three years,—in having the surplice darned, washed and laid up in fresh lavender, better than any other parish,—in having discovered a thief with a Bible and key—in his love of ringing,—in his tutoring young men and maidens to tune their voice as it were with a psaltery,—in being invited to the banquets of the Church officers,—in the hints he has given to young clergymen,—in his loyal attachment to the interests of 'our High Church.'[1] Such was the Parish Clerk of the eighteenth century, the personage upon whom the charge of the musical part of the service mainly devolved,—whose duty it was to give out[2] the Psalm, to lead it,[3] very commonly to read it out line by line,[4] and frequently to select what was to be sung. No wonder, Secker, speaking of Church psalmody, requested his clergy to take great care how they chose their clerks.[5] And no wonder, it may be added, that Church psalmody, under such conditions, fell into a state which was a reproach to the Church that could tolerate it.

In the first years of the eighteenth century there were still occasional discussions whether organs were to be considered

[1] Pope's *Works*, vii. 222–35. Naturally, Jacobite parsons were robed by Jacobite clerks. 'Who hath not observed several parish clerks that have ransacked Hopkins and Sternhold for staves in favour of the race of Jacob.'—Addison, in *The Freeholder*, No. 53.

[2] John Wesley (*Works*, x. 445), records an amusing reminiscence of his boyhood: 'One Sunday, immediately after sermon, my father's clerk said with an audible voice: "Let us sing to the praise, &c., an hymn of my own composing:

King William is come home, come home!
King William home is come!
Therefore let us together sing
The hymn that's called Te D'um."'

[3] 'Singing the first line, in order to put the congregation in tune.'—*Spectator*, No. 284. 'The clerk ordered to sing a Psalm, and so keep the congregation together, while Mr. Claxton was away.'—Thoresby's *Diary*, April 4, 1713.

[4] Bishop Gibson specially directed the clergy to instruct their clerks to do this. Charge of 1721, Gibson's *Charges*, 1744, 18.

[5] Secker's *Charges*, 65. At St. Lawrence Pountney, the candidates for the office had to 'take the desk' on trial on successive Sundays.—H. B. Wilson, *Hist. of St. Lawr. P.*, 160.

superstitious and Popish.[1] They had been destroyed or silenced in the time of the Commonwealth; and it was not without much misgiving on the part of timid Protestants that after the Restoration one London church after another[2] admitted the suspected instruments. An organ which was set up at Tiverton in 1696 gave rise to much dispute, and was the occasion of Dodwell writing on 'The lawfulness of instrumental music in holy offices.'[3] A pamphleteer in 1699, who signs himself N. N., quoted Isidore, Wicliffe, and Erasmus against the use of musical instruments in public worship.[4] Scotch Presbyterians and English Dissenters entirely abjured them, till Rowland Hill, near the end of the century, erected one in the Surrey Chapel.[5] It was noted, on the other hand, as one of the signs of High Church reaction in Queen Anne's time, that churches without organs had thinner congregations.[6]

It is perhaps not too much to say, that through a great part of the eighteenth century chanting was almost unknown in parish churches, and was regarded as distinctively belonging to 'Cathedral worship.' Watts, who, although a Nonconformist, was well acquainted with a great number of Churchmen, and was likely to be well informed on any question of psalmody, remarked, in somewhat quaint language, that 'the congregation of choristers in cathedral churches are the only Levites that sing praise unto the Lord with the words of David and Asaph the seer.'[7]

Even in Cathedrals musical services were looked upon with great disfavour by many, and by many others with a bare tolerance nearly allied to disapproval. Could the question of their continuance have been put to popular vote they might probably have been maintained by a small majority as being conformable to old custom, but without appreciation, and with an implied understanding that they were wholly exceptional. The Commissioners of King William's time had suggested that the chanting of divine service in cathedrals should be laid

[1] *Somers Tracts*, xii. 161. *The Scourge*, p. 123.
[2] Paterson's *Pietas Lond.*, *passim*.
[3] Brokesby's *Life of Dodwell*, 359, 369.
[4] *A Discourse concerning the Rise, &c., of Cathedral Worship*, 1699.
[5] V J. R. Charlesworth's *Life of Rowland Hill*, 156.
[6] Bishop Kennet's *Life*, 1730, 126.
[7] J. Watts's 'Essay on Psalmody'—*Works*, ix. 8.

aside;[1] and even Archbishop Sharp, although in many respects a High Churchman, told Thoresby that he did not much approve of singing the prayers, 'but it having been the custom of all cathedrals since the Reformation, it is not to be altered without a law.'[2] Exaggerated dread of Popery suspected latent evils, it scarcely knew what, lurking in this kind of worship. Perhaps, too, it was thought to border upon 'enthusiasm,' that other religious bugbear of the age. A paper in the 'Tatler' speaks of it not with disapproval, but with something of condescension to weaker minds, as 'the rapturous way of devotion.'[3] In fact, cathedrals in general were almost unintelligible to the prevalent sentiment of the eighteenth century. Towards the end of the period a spirit of appreciation grew up, which Malcolm speaks of as being in marked contrast with the contemptuous indifference of a former date.[4] They were regarded, no doubt, with a certain pride as splendid national memorials of a kind of devotion that had long passed away. Some young friends of David Hume, who had been to service at St. Paul's and found scarcely anybody there, began to speak of the folly of lavishing money on such useless structures, The famous sceptic gently rebuked them for talking without judgment. 'St. Paul's,' he said, 'as a monument of the religious feeling and taste of the country, does it honour and will endure. We have wasted millions upon a single campaign in Flanders, and without any good resulting from it.'[5] There was no fanatic dislike to cathedrals, as when Lord Brooke had hoped that he might see the day when not one stone of St. Paul's should be left upon another.[6] They were simply neglected, as if both they and those who yet loved the mode of worship perpetuated in them belonged to a bygone generation. In the North this was not so much the case. Durham Cathedral especially seems to have retained, in a greater degree than any other, not only the grandeur and hospitality of an older period, but also the affections of the townsmen around it. Defoe, in 1728, found a congregation

[1] Teale's *Lives of Eminent E. Laymen*, 260.

[2] R. Thoresby's *Diary*, March 16, 1697.

[3] *Tatler*, No. 198.

[4] J. P. Malcolm, *Manners, &c., of London*, i. 230.

[5] Caldwell Papers, quoted in *Q. Rev.* 97, 404.

[6] Laud's *Hist. of his Troubles*, 201, quoted in Southey's *Book of the Church*, 472.

of 500 people at the six-o'clock morning service.[1] In most cases, even on Sundays, the attendance was miserably thin. Doubtless, many individual members of cathedral chapters loved the noble edifice and its solemn services with a very profound attachment; but as a general rule, they belonged to the past and to the future far more than to the present. The only mode of utilising cathedrals which seems to have been thoroughly to the taste of the last century was the converting them into music-halls for oratorios. Early in the century we find Dean Swift at Dublin consenting, not, however, without much demur, to 'lend his cathedral to players and scrapers,' to act what he called their opera.[2] Next, in St. Paul's, at the annual anniversary of the Sons of the Clergy, sober Churchmen saw with disgust a careless, pleasure-loving audience listening to singers promiscuously gathered from the theatres, and laughing, and eating, and drinking their wine in the intervals of the performance.[3] Then came the festivals of the Three Choirs at Worcester, Gloucester, and Hereford, always open to objection, still more so at a time when the managers thought of little but how to achieve for their undertaking popularity and pecuniary success. Sublime as is the music of 'The Messiah,' it was not often performed in the last century without circumstances which jarred strongly against the devotional feeling of a deeply religious man like John Newton, and led him to what might otherwise seem a most unreasonable hatred of oratorios.[4]

In Queen Anne's time, there was often no part of the Church service in which the High or Low Church tone of the congregation was more closely betokened than when the preacher had just entered the pulpit. In the one case, the Bidding Prayer was said; in the other, there was an extempore prayer, often of considerable length, commonly called the pulpit prayer. The Bidding Prayer had its origin in pre-Reformation times. 'The way was first for the preacher to name and open his text, and then to call on the people to go to their prayers, and to tell them what they were to pray for; after which all the people said their beads in a general silence,

[1] Walcot's *Cathedrals*, 101.

[2] Dr. Swift, *To Himself on St. Cecilia's Day*. Anderson's *B. Poets*, ix. 107.

[3] Malcolm's *London*, i. 267.

[4] J. Newton's *Sermons on the Messiah*, 1784-5.

and the preacher also kneeled down and said his.'[1] It was thus not a prayer, but an exhortation to prayer, an instruction in the points commended to private but united worship. In Henry VIII.'s time the Pope's name was omitted, and prayer for the King under his proper titles strictly enjoined. In Elizabeth's reign, praise for all who had departed in God's faith was substituted for prayer in their behalf.[2] By the existing Canons, as agreed upon in 1603, preachers were instructed to move the people to join with them in prayer before the sermon either in the Bidding form, 'or to that effect as briefly as conveniently they may.'[3] It was, however, no longer clear whether it were itself a prayer, or, as in former time, an admonition to pray. On the one hand, it was called 'a form of prayer,' and was followed without a pause by the Lord's Prayer, and then by the sermon. On the other hand, it was prefaced not by the familiar 'Let us pray,' but by the old bidding, 'Ye shall pray,' or 'Pray ye,' and the congregation stood as listeners until the Lord's Prayer began.[4] Hence a difference in practice arose, curiously characteristic of the controversies, ecclesiastical and political, which were being agitated at the end of the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth century. In Charles I.'s reign, many of the clergy had chosen to consider it a prayer, and taking advantage of the permission to vary it, had converted it into one of those extempore effusions which Puritan feeling considered so peculiarly edifying.[5] It need hardly be added, that the Anglican party were more than ever careful to adhere to the older usage. After the Restoration, the Bidding Prayer was for a time not very much used, and the pulpit prayer, as adopted by Low Churchmen from Puritans and Presbyterians, began in many places to assume a most prominent position. 'Some men,' Sherlock said, in 1681, 'think they worship God sufficiently if they come time enough to Church to join in the pulpit prayer.'[6] High Churchmen could not endure it. 'It is

[1] Burnet's *Hist. of the Ref.*, quoted in S. Hilliard's *Obligation of the Clergy to keep strictly to the Bidding form*, 1715, 8.

[2] Wheatley's *B. of Common Prayer*, 1860, 171.

[3] Canon 55.

[4] Bisse's *Beauty of Holiness*, 1721, 154.

[5] Hilliard's *Obligations, &c.*, 19.

[6] Sherlock *On Public Worship*, 1681, 188.

a long, crude, extemporary prayer,' said South, 'in reproach of all the prayers which the Church, with such an admirable prudence and devotion, has been making before.'[1] The use, however, of extempore prayer in this part of the service was defended by some of the clergy and bishops, as agreeable to the people, as conformable to the custom of the Reformed Churches abroad,[2] and attractive to those among the Presbyterians and other denominations who only needed encouragement and a few slight concessions to exchange occasional for constant conformity. Meanwhile, at the end of the preceding century, 'the Bidding' had been more generally revived. Archbishop Tenison, in a circular to the clergy of 1695, had called attention to the neglect of it,[3] and the Bishop of London revived its general use in his own diocese, to the astonishment, says Fleetwood, of many congregations who stared and stood amazed at 'Ye shall pray.'[4] In Queen Anne's time it became very general,[5] being quite in accord with the High Church sentiment which had then strongly set in. A political bias also was suspected. Not, perhaps, without reason; for it was a time when political prepossessions which could not openly be declared, found vent in all kinds of byways. After the Revolution, while the title of the new sovereign was not yet secure, the Clergy were specially enjoined, that however else they might vary their prayer or exhortation to prayer before the sermon, they were in any case to mention the King by name. It was said—whether in sarcasm or as a grave reality—that the semi-Jacobite parsons, of whom there were many, found satisfaction in discovering a mode by which they could 'show at once their duty and their disgust'[6] in a manner unexceptionably accordant with the law and with the Canon. 'Ye are bidden to pray,' or, as a certain Dr. M—— always worded it, 'Ye must pray,'[7] did not necessarily imply much heart in fulfilling the

[1] South's *Works*, iv. 180. He elsewhere calls it 'a long, crude, impertinent, upstart harangue.' So also *Complaint of the Ch. of E.*, 1709, 19, and Thoresby's *Diary*, June 14, 1714. *The Royal Guard*, &c., 1684, 49.

[2] J. Bingham's *French Church's Apology for the Ch. of E.*—*Works*, ix. 106.

[3] Stoughton's *Church of the Revolution*, 205.

[4] Fleetwood's *Defence of Praying before Sermon*, 1720—*Works*, 738.

[5] G. G. Perry's *Hist of the Ch.*, 3, 228.

[6] *The Justice and Necessity of restraining the Clergy*, &c., 1715, 64.

[7] Id.

injunction by which the people were called upon to pray for their new lords. But, curiously enough, when George I. came to the throne, the political gloss attached to 'the Bidding' became reversed. In the royal directions to the archbishops, the canonical form, with the royal titles included, was strictly enjoined;[1] and consequently not those who used, but those who neglected it, ran a risk of being set down as having Jacobite proclivities. It had, however, never been really popular, and few objected to its gradual disuse. Ever since the Revolution, it had introduced into a portion of the public worship far too decided an element of political feeling. The objection was the greater, because the liberty of variation had given it a certain personal character. If the preacher did not keep strictly to the words of the Canon, he could scarcely avoid making it appear, by the names omitted or inserted, what might be his political, his ecclesiastical, or his academical opinions. Those, again, whose respect for dignities was in excess,—a foible to which the age was prone—would go through a list of titles, illustrious, right reverend, and right honourable,[2] which ill accorded with a time of prayer. Before the middle of the century, except in university churches or on formal occasions, the Canon became generally obsolete, and the sermon was prefaced, as often in our own day, by a Collect and the Lord's Prayer.

At the opening of the eighteenth century the pulpit was no longer the power it had been in past days. It had been the strongest support of the Reformation; and monarchs and statesmen had known well how immense was its influence in informing and guiding the popular mind on all questions which bore upon religion or Church politics. In proportion, however, as the agency of the press had been developed, the preachers had lost more and more of their old monopoly. Numberless essays and pamphlets appeared, reflecting all shades of educated opinion, with much to say on questions of social morality and the duties of Churchmen and citizens. They did not by any means interfere with the primary office of the sermon. They were calculated rather to do preaching a good service. When other means of instruction are wanting,

[1] *Direction to our Archbishops*, &c., Dec. 11, 1714, § vi.

[2] *Spectator*, No. 312.

the preacher may feel himself bound to include a wide range of subjects. When the press comes to his aid, and relieves him for the most part of the more secular of his topics, he is the more at liberty to confine himself to matters which have a primary and direct bearing upon the spiritual life. In any case, however, whether the change be, on the whole, beneficial or not to the general character of preaching, it must evidently deprive it of some part of its former influence.

Yet in the reigns of William and Queen Anne good preaching was still highly appreciated and very popular. Jablouski said of his Protestant fellow-countrymen in Prussia, that the sermon had come to be considered so entirely the important part of the service that people commonly said, 'Will you go to sermon?' instead of 'to Church.'[1] It was not quite so in England; yet undoubtedly there was very generally something of the same feeling. 'Many,' said Sherlock, 'who have little other religion, are forward enough to hear sermons, and many will miss the prayers and come in only in time to hear the preaching.'[2] We find it observed that it was injurious to the funds of a charity to advertise too generally that any favourite or well-known divine would preach in its behalf, for such a mob flocked to hear him that the 'paying' part of the congregation is crowded out.[3] If some of the incentives to good preaching, and some of the attributes which had distinguished it, were no longer conspicuous, other causes had come in to maintain the honour of the pulpit. That stir and movement of the intellectual faculty which was everywhere beginning to test the power of reason on all questions of theology and faith had both brought into existence a new style of preaching, and had secured for it a number of attentive hearers. The anxious and earnest, but, notwithstanding its occasional virulence, the somewhat unimpassioned controversy with Rome, and the newly aroused hopes of reconciliating the moderate Dissenters, had tended to a similar result. A rich, imaginative eloquence, though it could not fail to have admirers, was out of favour, not only with those who considered Tillotson the model preacher, but also with High Churchmen.

[1] Jablouski's Correspondence, in *Archbishop Sharp's Life*, by his Son, ii. 157, App. 2, 3. [2] Sherlock, *On Rel. Worship*, 66.

[3] R. Nelson, quoted in Teale's *Lives*, 324.

Jeremy Taylor would hardly have ranked high in Bishop Bull's estimation. His wit and metaphors, and 'tuneful pointed sentences,' would almost certainly have been adjudged by the good Bishop of St. David's unworthy of the grave and solid dignity of the pulpit.[1] And brilliant as were the sallies of Dr. South's vigorous and highly seasoned declamations, they were rarely of a kind to kindle imagination and stir emotion. The edge of his arguments was keen and cold; and they were addressed to the common reason of his hearers, no less than those of the 'Latitudinarian' Churchmen with whom he most delighted to contend.

Hearers of sermons did not miss qualities which they did not greatly care for. After all, it was some credit to the age that the preaching which it chiefly valued should have been of a sort whose characteristic excellence was, that it ever sought in plain, unaffected language to commend the Christian faith to the sober reasoning of thinking people. The preacher who could do most to satisfy these desires had, as yet, no fear of empty churches. Atterbury was probably beyond comparison the most eloquent of the preachers of Queen Anne's reign. Doddridge entitled him 'the glory of English orators;'[2] and the Duke of Wharton spoke in terms of no ordinary praise of the winning power of his language, 'as honey sweet, as soft as heavenly dew.'[3] But the most celebrated preacher of his day is said to have been Fleetwood, whose 'peculiar talent was in making things plain which seemed to many difficult.'[4] Archbishop Sharp, whose sermons were always marked with great plainness and simplicity, was also very popular in the pulpit. Nor was there any intrinsic reason why such sermons should be deficient in spiritual force,—still less, that they should degenerate into moral essays. In fact, their chief fault, during the Revolution period, and the generation that immediately followed it, was simply that they appealed too exclusively to the sense

[1] Nelson's *Life of Bull*, 420. South was very alive to the special faults into which Jeremy Taylor was led by his too exuberant fancy, and has pointed them out with truth and pungency, and also with some malice. See H. Rogers's *Contributions to the Ed. Rev.*, i. 431.

[2] Quoted in *Memoirs and Correspondence of F. Atterbury*, by Folkestone Williams, i. 71.

[3] Id. i. 314.

[4] Pref. to Fleetwood's *Works*, viii.

of reason; and next, that labour was often spent in attempts to confute the infidel and the sceptic, which would have been better employed, as a rule, in exhortations to the conscience of believers.

That degradation of religion, which, even in the earlier years of the century, was beginning to lower the Gospel of redemption into a philosophy of morality, has been spoken of in a previous chapter.[1] Under its depressing influence, preaching sank to a very low ebb. Hurd, in 1761, said, with perfect truth, that 'the common way of sermonising had become most wretched, and even the best models very defective.'[2] By that date, however, improvement had already begun. It was sometimes said, and the assertion was not altogether unfounded, that these cold pulpit moralities were in great measure the recoil from Methodist extravagances. But far more generally, as the century advanced, Methodism promoted the beneficial change which had already been noted in the case of Secker. The more zealous and observant of the Clergy could not fail to learn a valuable lesson from the wonderful power over the souls of men which their Methodist fellow workmen—the irregulars of the Church—had acquired. And independently of their example, the same leaven was working among those sharers in the Evangelical revival who remained steadfast to the Established order, as among those who felt themselves cramped by it. Whatever in other respects might be their faults of style and matter, they were, at all events, in no point what some sermons were called—'Stoical Essays,' 'imitations from a Christian pulpit of Seneca and Epictetus.'[3] There were many mannerisms, and there was much want of breadth of thought, but in heart and purpose it was a true preaching of the Gospel.

Even towards the end of the century there were a few notable instances of the power which a great preacher might yet command. We are told of Dean Kirwan, who had left the Roman for the English Church, that even in times of public calamity and distress, his irresistible powers of persuasion repeatedly produced contributions exceeding a thou-

[1] Vol. i. 325-8, ii. 39-42.

[2] Warburton and Hurd's *Correspondence*, 31.

[3] Horsley's *Charges*, 6; *Reflection on the Clergy*, &c., 1798, 42.

sand or twelve hundred pounds at a sermon; and his hearers, not content with emptying their purses into the plate, sometimes threw in jewels or watches in earnest of further benefactions.[1] A sermon of Bishop Horsley once produced an effect which would hardly be possible, except under circumstances of great public excitement. When he preached in Westminster Abbey, before the House of Lords, on January 30, 1793, the whole assembly, stirred by his peroration, rose as with one impulse, and remained standing till the sermon ended.[2]

Little need be said about faults of style and delivery. Ungracious manner, unhappy tones of voice, inelegant English, hurried pronunciation, affectations and singularities, a lifeless, dry and unimpressive style, or sometimes one that was florid and theatrical, occasional pedantry and foolish displays of learning, or a coarse and undignified homeliness—these, and such other faults as these, gave abundant material for good or ill natured censure. But even those who were most disposed to take a high estimate of English sermons generally acknowledged, that serious blemishes of these kinds were more general than might reasonably have been expected. 'The clergy of Great Britain,' said the 'Tatler,' 'are, I believe, the most learned in the world, and yet this art of speaking is wholly neglected among them.'[3]

Burnet spoke of written sermons as the almost universal practice of English divines, and said they had begun after the popular and loose extempore way of preaching among the friars. The custom had caused a deficiency of heat and fire, but had 'produced the greatest treasure of weighty, grave, and solid sermons that the Church of God ever had.'[4] In Charles II.'s time, some attempt was made to effect a change in this custom. The Duke of Monmouth wrote to the University of Cambridge, of which he was Chancellor: 'His Majesty hath commanded me to signify to you his pleasure that the said practice (which took beginning with the disorders of the late times) be laid aside, and that the aforesaid preachers deliver their sermons both in

[1] Pref. to W. B. Kirwan's *Sermons*, quoted in *Q. Rev.*, xi. 133.

[2] A. P. Stanley's *Hist. Mem. of Westminster Abbey*, 535.

[3] *Tatler*, No. 65 and 70.

[4] Burnet's *Hist. of the Ref.*, v. 1., quoted in *Life of Sharp*, i. 40.

Latin and English by memory, or without book, as being a way of preaching which his Majesty judgeth most agreeable to the use of foreign Churches, and to the custom of the University heretofore, and the nature and intendment of that holy exercise.'[1] This injunction was very scantily obeyed, and the eighteenth century was even less than any other an exception to the general rule. The laity, said Swift, are all for extempore sermons, but the clergy are all for written ones.[2] Towards the end of the period, however, a considerable number of the clergy followed the example of the Methodists and laid aside the book. 'Extempore preaching,' as Polwhele somewhat oddly puts it, 'is one of the most obvious of the distinctions between the Evangelical and canonical clergy.'[3]

Amid the excited and angry controversies which occupied the earlier years of the century, the pulpit did not by any means retain a befitting calm. Later in the century there was no great cause for complaint on this ground.

Whiston says that he sometimes read in church one of the Homilies. So, no doubt, did others. But even in 1691 we find it mentioned that they could not be much used without scandal, as if they were read from laziness. 'The more the pity,' says the writer in question, 'for they are good preaching.'[4] It was one of Tillotson's ideas to get a new set of Homilies written, as a supplement to the existing ones. There was to be one for each Sunday and principal holy day in the year; and the whole was to constitute a semi-authorised corpus of doctrinal and practical divinity adapted for general instruction and family reading. Burnet, Lloyd, and Patrick joined in the scheme, and some progress was made in carrying it out. It met, however, with opposition, and was ultimately laid aside.[5]

To nearly every one of the London Churches in Queen Anne's time a Lecturer was attached, independent in most cases of the incumbent.[6] A great many of these foundations were an inheritance from Puritan times. The duty required

[1] Of date Oct. 8, 1674, quoted in *Justice of Restraining the Clergy*, 28–9.
[2] 'Letter to a Young Clergyman'—*Works*, 8, 214.
[3] Pref. to *Lavington*, 221.
[4] *Officium Cleri*, 1691, 31.
[5] Birch's *Life of Tillotson*, cclv.
[6] Paterson's *Pietas Londinensis*.

being only that of preaching, men had been able to take a Lectureship who disapproved of various particulars in the order and government of the Established Church, and would not have entered themselves in the list of her regular ministers.[1] There had been some advantage and some evil in this. It had enlarged to some extent the action of the Church, and provided within its limits a field of activity for men whose preaching was acceptable to a great number of Churchmen, but who hovered upon the borders of Nonconformity. Only it secured this advantage in a makeshift and scarcely authorised manner, and at the risk of introducing into parishes a source of disunion which was justly open to complaint. Lecturers were added to the Church system in towns without being incorporated into it. Room should have been found for them, without permanently attaching to a parish church a preacher whose views might be continually discordant with those of the Incumbent and his Curates. Under the circumstances, it was perhaps no more than a prudent requirement of the Act of Uniformity, that Lecturers should duly sign the Articles and before their first lecture read the Prayers, and make the same declarations as were obligatory upon other clergymen. They retained, however, something of the distinctive character which had marked them hitherto. Generally, they were decided Low Churchmen; the more so as lectureships were very commonly in the choice of the people, and the bulk of the electors were just that class of tradesmen in whom the Puritan, and afterwards the so-called Presbyterian, party in the Church had found its strongest support. For a like reason they were sometimes, no doubt, too much addicted to those arts by which the popular ear is won and retained, and which were particularly offensive to men whose most characteristic merits and faults were those of a different system. Bishop Newton said that lectureships were often disagreeable preferments, as subject to so many humours and caprices.[2] On the other hand, the principal Lecturers in London held a position which able men might well be ambitious of holding. Nor was the long list of eminent men who

[1] *The Church of England's Complaint*, &c., 1709, 21-2. *The Scourge*, No. 10, 1717. Folwhele's Preface to Lavington, 220.

[2] Bishop Newton's *Life and Works*, i. 85.

had held London lectureships composed by any means exclusively of the leaders of one section of the English Church. If it contained the names of Tillotson, and Burnet, and Fleetwood, and Blackhall, and Willis, and Hoadly, and Herring, it contained also those of Sharp and Atterbury, of Stanhope, Bennet, Moss, and Marshall. The Lecture of St. Lawrence Jewry was conspicuously high in repute. 'Though but moderately endowed in point of profit, it was long considered as the post of honour. It had been possessed by a remarkable succession of the most able and celebrated preachers, of whom were the Archbishops Tillotson and Sharp; and it was usually attended by a variety of persons of the first note and eminence, particularly by numbers of the clergy, not only of the younger sort, but several also of long standing and established character.'[1] On Friday evenings it was in fact described as being 'not so much a concourse of people, but a convocation of divines.'[2] The suburbs, too, of London had their Lecturers, supported by voluntary contributions, 'the amount of which put to shame the scanty stipends of the curates.'[3] At the end of the period the Lecturers kept their place, but in diminished numbers;[4] their relative importance being the more dimmed by the increase in number of the parochial clergy, and by the migration from the old city churches to new ones in the suburbs and chapels of ease where no such foundations existed.

It is almost sad to note in Paterson's 'Pietas Londinensis' the number of commemorative sermons founded in London parishes under the vain hope of perpetuating a name for ever. At that time, however, 'all these lectures were constantly observed on their appointed days.'[5] Funeral sermons had for some time been flourishing far too vigorously. Bossuet and Massillon have left magnificent examples of the noble pulpit oratory to which such occasions may give rise. But in England, funeral sermons were too often a reproach to the

[1] J. Nichol's *Literary Anecd. of Eighteenth Cent.* iv. 152.
[2] *Archbishop Sharp's Life*, by his Son, i. 31.
[3] *Hardships of the Inferior Clergy in and about London*, &c. 1722, 85.
[4] *London Parishes*, &c.
[5] Paterson's *Piet. Lond.* 49, 50.

clergy who could preach them, and to the public opinion which encouraged them. Just in the same way as a book could scarcely be published without a dedication which, it might be thought, would bring only ridicule upon the personage extravagantly belauded in it, so it was with these funeral sermons. A good man like Kettlewell might well be 'scandalised with such fulsome panegyrics; it grieved him to the soul to see flattery take sanctuary in the pulpit.'[1] They had become an odious system, an ordinary funeral luxury, often handsomely paid for, which even the poor were ambitious to purchase.

Towards the end of the century guinea or half-guinea funeral sermons,[2] though they held their ground here and there, were happily falling into disuse.

At the beginning of the eighteenth century baptisms during time of public service were decidedly unfrequent. There had been at one time such great and widely-spread scruples at the sign of the cross and the use of sponsors, that many people had preferred, where they found it possible, to get their children baptized at home, that these adjuncts of the rite might be dispensed with. During the Commonwealth, so long as the public ceremonial of the Church of England was prohibited, private baptism had become a custom even among those Churchmen who were most attached to the Anglican ritual. Such, thought Sherlock, were the principal causes of a neglect which seems to have become in his time almost universal.[3] Often the form for public baptism was used on such occasions. But this irregularity was not the worst. There can be no doubt that these 'home christenings' had got to be very commonly looked upon as little more than an idle ceremony, and an occasion for jollity and tippling. The flagrant abuse could not fail to shock the minds of earnest men. We find Sherlock,[4] Bull,[5] Atterbury,[6]

[1] Teale's *Lives*, 253. So also *Complaint of the Ch. of E.* 1709, 23.

[2] Gay's *Shepherd's Week* (1714) 'The Dirge,' 121. Cf. Brand's *Pop. Antiq. of Portland:* 'The minister has half a guinea for every funeral sermon, an honour of which all are ambitious for their friends and children,' &c. ii. 279. Also Fielding's *Jos. Andrews*, p. i. ch. 16.

[3] Sherlock *On Public Worship*, pt. ii. ch. 4.

[4] Id. [5] Nelson's *Life of Bull*, 39, 366.

[6] F. Williams' *Memoirs of Atterbury*, i. 266.

Stanhope,[1] Berriman,[2] Secker,[3] and a number of other Churchmen, using their best endeavours to bring about a more seemly reverence for the holy ordinance.

The taking of fees for baptism was a scandal not to be excused on any ground of prescription. This appears to have been not very unusual, and to have been done without shame and without rebuke.[4] Probably it chiefly grew out of the above-mentioned habit of having this sacrament celebrated privately in houses.

Early in the century the sign of the cross in baptism was still looked upon by many with great suspicion. Even in 1773 Dean Tucker speaks of it[5] as one of the two principal charges—the other being that of kneeling at the Eucharist—made by Dissenters against the established ritual. Objections to the use of sponsors were not so often heard. They would have been fewer still if there had been many Robert Nelsons. His letters to his godson, a young man just setting out to a merchant's office in Smyrna,[6] are models of sound advice given by a wise, Christian-hearted man of the world. Wesley thought the office a good and expedient one; but regretted, as many other Churchmen before and since have done, the form in which some of the questions are put.[7]

A discussion which was started between 1710 and 1730 about lay baptism can only be very briefly noticed in a chapter which has mainly to do with the externals of public worship. Uncomfortable doubts had been aroused in some minds as to whether baptism performed in various irregular ways in the time of the Commonwealth had been indeed true Sacraments of the Gospel. Several Nonjurors, as Dodwell, Lawrence, Hickes, and Brett, declared in the negative,[8] and many of the stronger Sacerdotalists among the conforming clergy were of the same opinion. Men, on the other hand,

[1] Nichol's *Lit. An.* iv. 169.

[2] J. Burtson's *Hist. of Merch. Taylors*, 1075.

[3] Secker's *Eight Charges*, 254.

[4] Gilbert Wakefield's *Memoirs*, 282; *Miseries of the Inferior Clergy*, &c., 1722, 18.

[5] Dean Tucker's *Works*, 1772; *Letter to Dr. Kippis*, 23; *Works*, vol. i.

[6] Secretan's *Life of Nelson.*

[7] Wesley's *Works*, x. 507–9.

[8] Lathbury's *Hist. of Nonjurors*, 381–3; *Life of Archbishop Sharp*, i. 373–7,

of less extreme views, were much annoyed that a question should be opened upon which the judgment alike of the Primitive Church and of the Church of England seemed perfectly clear. There was, however, some doubt as to the proper course to take. Archbishop Tenison, Burnet, and other bishops, submitted to Convocation a declaration on the subject 'for the quieting of doubts and scruples.' Some members of the Upper House declined to sign it: they entirely agreed with it, they said, in substance, but were afraid of encouraging irregularities. In the Lower House this opinion was more strongly expressed, and the declaration was set aside so emphatically as to give some countenance to the belief that the majority of the assembly denied the validity of lay baptisms, and, in fact, of baptisms by persons not episcopally ordained.[1] It appears, however, from a letter of Atterbury, who was then prolocutor of the House, that this was not the case. The general wish, he assured Trelawney, was 'to declare nothing at all concerning it.'[2] In any case, as the question was distinctly forced on their consideration, such reticence was not altogether creditable to the candour of the body.

In the latter part of the seventeenth and through the earlier years of the eighteenth century, we find earnest Churchmen of all opinions sorely lamenting the comparative disuse of the old custom of catechizing on Sunday afternoons. Five successive archbishops of Canterbury—Sheldon, Sancroft, Tillotson, Tenison, and Wake—however widely their opinions might differ on some points relating to the edification of the Church, were cordially agreed in this.[3] Sherlock, Kettlewell, Bull, Beveridge, Sharp, Fleetwood, may be mentioned as others, who both by precept and example insisted upon its importance. After Bishop Frampton's inability to take the oaths had caused his deprivation, the one public

ii. 27; Fleetwood's *Judgment of the Ch. of E. in the Case of Lay Bapt.* 1712—*Works*, 515; Nichol's *Lit. An.* iv. 228; Hunt, *Rel. Th. in E.* iii. 49; *Perry's Hist. of the Ch. of E.* iii. 253; Whiston's *Argument*, &c. 1714, 3.

[1] E. Calamy's *Hist. Acct. of my own Life*, ii. 238. Calamy, notwithstanding his general friendliness towards the English Church, naturally expressed himself on this occasion with considerable warmth and indignation.

[2] F. Williams' *Life of F. Atterbury*, i. 175.

[3] J. Nichol's *Lit. Anecd.* i. 475; Tillotson's *Works*, iii. 514–16.

ministerial act in which he delighted to take part was to gather the children about him during the afternoon service, and catechize them, and expound to them the sermon they had heard.[1] It seemed to them all that no preaching could take the place of catechizing as a means of bringing home to the young and scantily educated the doctrines of the Christian faith and the practical duties of religion, and that it was also eminently adapted to create an intelligent attachment to the Church in which they had been brought up. Such arguments had, of course, all the greater weight at a time when elementary schools were as yet so far from general, and the art of reading was still, comparatively speaking, the accomplishment of a few.

A vigorous but not very effectual attempt was made by many bishops and clergymen to enforce the canon which required servants and apprentices, as well as children, to attend the catechizing. Bull, for example, and Fleetwood, not only urged it as a duty, but charged the churchwardens of their dioceses to present for ecclesiastical rebuke or penalty all who refused to comply.[2] In the Isle of Man the commanding personal influence of Bishop Wilson succeeded in carrying the system out. By the ecclesiastical constitution of 1704, which for many years was as conscientiously carried out as it had been frankly accepted, all children and unconfirmed servants were to be regularly catechized for half an hour at evening prayer. A catalogue of persons was kept, and parents or masters were fined twopence for the first absence, fourpence for the second, and sixpence for the third, unless it could be shown that it was the servant who was in fault.[3] But elsewhere pastoral monitions and ecclesiastical menaces were generally unavailing to overcome the repugnance which people who were no longer children felt to the idea of submitting themselves to public questioning.[4] Bishop Bull at Brecknock practically confessed the futility of the effort by giving a dole of twelvepence a week to old people of that

[1] Lathbury's *Hist. of the Nonjurors*, 203.

[2] Nelson's *Life of Bull*, 359; Fleetwood's *Works*, 472.

[3] C. Cruttwell's *Life of Wilson*, 64.

[4] Sherlock *On Public Worship*, 204; *Life of Kettlewell*, 91; Secker's *Charges*, 53.

town on condition of their submitting to the ordeal. Thomas Gouge, a very worthy man, greatly respected by Tillotson, did the same. He thought such instruction was specially fitting for 'the more aged poor, who, being past labour, had leisure enough to attend upon this exercise.'

Throughout the middle and latter part of the century catechizing, although continually and emphatically insisted upon in bishops' charges, became less than ever a regular part of the instruction of the Church. Many of the 'Evangelical' clergy restored the custom where it had fallen through, though they did not always use the catechism. Elsewhere it was very generally confined, except when a confirmation was at hand, to the Sundays that preceded Easter.

Richard Baxter in the seventeenth century had said of confirmation that so far from scrupling the true use of it, there was scarce any outward thing in the Church he valued more highly. But he liked not, he added, the English way. Dioceses were so vast that a bishop could not perform this and other offices for a hundredth part of his flock. Not one in a hundred was confirmed at all; and often the sacred rite wore the appearance of 'a running ceremony' and 'a game for boys.'[1] Half a century later, in 1747, we find exactly the same reproach in Whiston's 'Memoirs.' 'Confirmation,' he said, 'is, I doubt, much oftener omitted than performed. And it is usually done in the Church of England in such a hurry and disorder, that it hardly deserves the name of a sacred ordinance of Christianity.'[2] Fifty years again after this a clergyman, speaking of the great use of confirmation fitly prepared for and duly solemnised, describes it as being very constantly nothing better than 'a holiday ramble.'[3] If, as Secker in one of his Charges said, the esteem of it was generally preserved in England,[4] it certainly retained that respect in spite of circumstances which must inevitably have tended to bring it into disregard and contempt. But there was generally one preservative at least to keep the rite from

[1] Baxter's *English Nonconformity*, chap. 19, quoted in J. Bingham's *Works*, 'Objection of Dissenters Considered,' b. iii. ch. 21.

[2] Whiston's *Memoirs*, 469.

[3] *The Church of England Vindicated*, &c. 1801, 15.

[4] Secker's Charge of 1741.

degenerating into a mere unedifying ceremony. There was no period in the last century when the office and person of a bishop was not looked upon with a good deal of reverence among the people generally; nor is there any part of a bishop's office in which he speaks with so much weight of fatherly authority as when he confirms the young. And, besides, it would be very erroneous to suppose that there were not many bishops and many clergymen who did their utmost to make the rite an impressive reality. The poet Cowper, for instance, spoke of his confirmation at Westminster School as an era in his spiritual life, and mentioned in warm terms of praise the pains which the head-master, Dr. Nichols, had taken in preparing his pupils. 'The old man acquitted himself of this duty like one who had a deep sense of its importance; and I believe most of us were struck by his manner and affected by his exhortations. Then for the first time I attempted to pray in secret.'[1] And many passages might be quoted from charges to the clergy and addresses to the confirmed, in which some of the bishops spoke with much earnest emphasis of the means by which the ordinance might attain its due religious weight.[2]

A passage occurs in Bishop Newton's autobiography which may illustrate the well-known maxim that our own feelings and ideas are but a very imperfect indication of what might seem most edifying to another age. There are few who would not think it, if not a slovenly custom, at least a far less impressive one, for the bishop, at a confirmation, to lay hands in silence upon all the successive candidates, and afterwards to pronounce the prayer for all collectively. Yet the writer in question tells us that when the Archbishop of York proposed this at his primary visitation to the clergy of Nottingham, they all unanimously approved it, and that 'clergy and laity were struck with the decency and solemnity of it.'[3] This mode became afterwards very frequent.

When the Act 'for the better preventing of Clandestine

[1] Southey's *Cowper*, i. 13, quoted in A. P. Stanley's *Hist. M. of Westminster Abbey*, 534.

[2] Especially, Bishop Butler's Charge to the Clergy, 1751, and Porteus' Confirmation Address of 1802, given in Hodgson's *Life of Porteus*, 166.

[3] Bishop Newton's *Life and Works*, i. 77.

Marriages' was carried in 1753, Horace Walpole[1] taunted the bishops with their obsequiousness in assenting to a measure which in certain cases, he said, dissolved marriages on temporal grounds. In this he was even more unfair than usual. The bench of bishops would have incurred a grave responsibility if they had opposed a bill which was necessary on many accounts, and not least because it put an end to one of the most scandalous enormities of the century. That abominable system of clandestine marriages which reached its acme in the neighbourhood of the Debtors' Prison in the Fleet, has been made mention of by many writers,[2] and needs but few words here. No licences were required and no inconvenient questions were ever pressed by the dissolute reprobates, the scum and refuse, as they have been truly called, of the English clergy, who performed the mockery of a hallowed rite in the low taverns which abounded in that district. One of them, William Dore by name, married an average of 150 or 200 couples every month; and 'on the last day allowed by the Act, March 24, 1753, upward of three hundred marriages took place.'[3] Apart from these glaring scandals there had been up to that date much irregularity. Banns were an established ordinance; but notwithstanding the remonstrances of some of the clergy, who urged, like Parson Adams, that the Church had prescribed a form with which all Christians ought to comply,[4] they were, as Walpole says, 'totally in disuse, except among the inferior people.'[5] Licences were obtained too easily,[6] and not sufficiently insisted upon, and evening marriages were by no means unknown.[7] After 1753 these abuses ceased. But most readers will remember that until a very recent date Church feeling had not restored to their proper honour the publication of banns. They were thought somewhat plebeian; and the high-fashionable and aristocratic method

[1] Walpole's *Memoirs of the Reign of George II.* 1846, 146.

[2] Lord Mahon's *History*, chap. 31; C. Knight's *Old England;* A. Andrews' *Eighteenth Century*, chaps. 3 and 4; Malcolm's *Manners and Customs of London*, ii. 272.

[3] A. Andrews' *Eighteenth Century*, chap. 3.

[4] Fielding's *Thomas Andrews*, b. ii. ch. 13.

[5] H. Walpole's *Memoirs of George II.* 342.

[6] Fleetwood's *Works*, 469; *Archbishop Sharp's Life*, i. 353.

[7] *Church of England's Complaint*, 1709, Preface.

was to celebrate a marriage by special licence in a drawing-room, and with curtailed service.[1]

The costly but ugly and unmeaning appurtenances which a simpler taste will soon, it is to be hoped, banish from our funerals, were customary long before the eighteenth century began. In George III.'s reign a prodigal expenditure on such occasions began to be thought less essential. Before that time the relatives of the deceased were generally anxious that the obsequies should be as pompous as their means would possibly allow. It was still much as it had been in the days of Charles II., when 'it was ordinarily remarked that it cost a private gentleman of small estate more to bury his wife than to endow his daughter for marriage to a rich man.'[2] The bodies of 'persons of condition,' and of wealthy merchants or tradesmen, were often laid out in state in rooms draped with black, illuminated with wax candles, and thrown open to neighbours and other visitors.[3] Sometimes, as at Pepys' funeral, an immense number of gold memorial rings were lavished even among comparatively slight acquaintances.[4]

When Stillingfleet in 1696 made some remarks in a charge to his clergy upon the want among Dissenters of some recognised authority, Calamy quoted in reply the Bishop's admission that his own Church could boast but little of its discipline. He added that every first day of Lent Churchmen lamented that the primitive rule had passed so much away, yet took no pains to revive it.[5] But, in fact, those who most desired its revival could not but acknowledge its hopelessness. However much they might deplore the fact that Church discipline was so little of a reality, and attribute to its decline a great decay of piety and morality,[6] they knew well that except under very altered circumstances no return of it was possible in England. Perhaps if it could have been purged of all suspicion of being used as an instrument of priestly influence, there might have been some chance of bringing about a general and salutary

[1] Beresford Hope, *Worship in the Ch. of E.* 26.
[2] J. C. Jeaffreson's *Book about Clergy*, ii. 92.
[3] C. Andrews' *Eighteenth Century*, chap. v.
[4] S. Pepys' *Diary*, v. App. 452.
[5] Calamy's *Life and Times*, i. 373.
[6] R. Moss, Sermon of May 27, 1708, 14; Nelson's *Life of Bull*, 367; J. Johnson's *Vade Mecum*, i. 274.

enforcement of provisions that were not yet altogether a dead letter. But whatever might be the case in regard of the clergy, the canons of the Church were not binding upon the laity, except so far as their regulations were embodied, or at least accepted, in common law; and there was no disposition in the country at large to give them any greater weight than they were clearly entitled to. It was often a matter of great difficulty to maintain even that measure of corrective discipline the right of which the law of England did undoubtedly guarantee to the Church. Forms were kept up, but there was little spirit and power in them.[1] Censures might be legally and rightfully passed which could not always be duly executed.[2]

Yet throughout the whole of the eighteenth century Church discipline was in some respects a much greater reality than it is in our own day. No doubt in its later years the difference lay more in possibilities than in actual fact; so that the alterations in the law of excommunication made by the Act of 1813, exceedingly important as they were to persons who had come under censure of the ecclesiastical courts, had no very visible or direct bearing upon the English Church in general. Excommunication had been for some time becoming more than ever an unfamiliar word, limited almost entirely to the use of law courts. When, therefore, various obsolete practices relating to it were swept away and its consequences rendered less formidable, it is probable that few but lawyers were cognisant of any change. But in the first half of the last century, amid a number of complaints that notorious vice so continually escaped the formal censure of the Church, it is also evident that presentments and excommunications were far from uncommon, and that even open penance was not an excessive rarity. Episcopal instructions on the subject are frequent. Thus Archbishop Sharp requests his clergy to be very careful of anything like persecution; but where they cannot reform habitual delinquents, such as drunkards, profane persons, neglecters of God's worship, &c., by softer means, to take measures that they be presented. He would then do all he could before proceeding to excommunication. When that sentence had been actually denounced he allowed the clergy-

[1] W. Gardner's *Faithful Pastor*, 1745, 4.

[2] *The Character of a Churchman*, 1690; *Somers Tracts*, ix. 178.

man to absolve the offender in sickness, when penitent, without the formal absolution under the Court Seal. Commutation for penances he did not approve of, but would sometimes allow them on the advice of the minister of the parish; the commutation to be entirely applied to Church uses and as notoriously as the offence had been. The public good was to be the rule.[1] Secker's instructions to the clergy of Oxford in 1753 are still more full, though he prefaces them by the acknowledgment that he is 'perfectly sensible that both immorality and religion are grown almost beyond the reach of ecclesiastical power, which, having been in former times unwarrantably extended, hath been very unjustly cramped and weakened many ways.'[2] Five years later, in his first Canterbury Charge, Secker speaks much less confidently on this subject. Wickedness, he said, of almost every kind, had made dreadful progress, but ecclesiastical authority was 'not only too much hindered, but too much despised to do almost anything to any purpose. In the small degree that it could be exerted usefully he trusted it would be.'[3] He expressed himself to the same effect and still more regretfully in his last written production, his 'Concio coram synodo' in 1761.[4]

Fleetwood reminded the clergy and churchwardens that they were to present not only for flagitious conduct, but also for non-attendance at worship, for neglecting to send children or servants to be catechized, for not paying Church rates, and for public teaching without licence.[5]

While a system of Church discipline carried out by presentments and excommunications was still, more or less effectually, in force, commutation of penance was very properly a matter for grave and careful consideration. It was obvious that laxity on such a point might fairly lay the Church open to a reproach, which Dissenters did not fail to make, of 'indulgences for sale.'[6] One of William III.'s injunctions of 1695 was that 'no commutation of penance be made but by the express order of the bishop, and that the commutation be applied only to pious and charitable uses.'[7] Early in Queen

[1] *Life of Archbishop Sharp*, i. 209–13.
[2] Secker's *Eight Charges*, 166–72. [3] Id. 239.
[4] Id. 370. [5] Fleetwood's *Works*, 472, 474, 479.
[6] T. Lewis, *Danger of the Church Estab.* &c. 1720.
[7] G. G. Perry's *Hist. of the Ch. of E.* iii. 100.

Anne's reign, in consequence of abuses which existed, the subject was debated in Convocation, and some stringent resolutions passed, by which it was hoped that commutations, where allowed, might be rendered perfectly unexceptionable.[1] In fact, most Churchmen who desired to keep some hold upon the system of discipline, which was, as it were, melting away in their hands, would heartily have echoed the wish of John Johnson that it should be exercised on the strict condition of no money being paid by rich or poor.[2] To the mind of lawyers, on the other hand, there was little weight or substance in the reproach against the Church that 'persons of rank and figure generally find means to evade the article of shame by commutation of penances.'[3] A money payment in place of other penalty was a thing of daily occurrence in all law courts. Some lay chancellors, we are told, wished to do away with penance altogether, and to substitute a regular system of fines payable to the public purse.[4]

The poet Wordsworth has said that one of his earliest remembrances was the going to church one week-day to see a woman doing penance in a white sheet, and the disappointment of not getting a penny, which he had been told was given to all lookers-on.[5] This must have been a very rare event at that date—about 1777.[6] Early in the century this sort of ecclesiastical pillory was somewhat more common. But it was evidently quite unfrequent even then. Pope's parish clerk is made to speak of it as distinctly an event. This, which was called 'solemn penance,' as contrasted with that lesser form which might consist only of confession and satisfaction, was an ordeal which sounds like a strange anachronism in times so near our own. Bishop Hildesley thus describes it in the Isle of Man, where it was enforced upon certain delinquents far more generally than elsewhere. 'The

[1] Gibson's *Codex*, 1046, quoted in Burn's *Eccl. Law*, Art. 'Penance.'

[2] J. Johnson, *Vade Mecum*, ii. § cvii.

[3] R. Seagrave's *True Protestant*, 1751, 30.

[4] J. Johnson, *Vade Mecum*, ii. cvii.

[5] *Memoirs of W. Wordsworth*, by Christoph. Wordsworth, 1851, 8.

[6] So also in the South of England, between 1799 and 1803. 'The two women she took most notice of in the parish were the last persons who ever did penance at Hurstmonceaux, having both to stand in a white sheet in the Churchyard; so that people said, "There are Mrs. Hare Naylor's friends doing penance."' A. J. C. Hare's *Memorials of a Quiet Life*, i. 143.

manner of doing penance is primitive and edifying. The penitent, clothed in a white sheet, &c., is brought into the church immediately before the Litany, and there continues till the sermon is ended ; after which, and a proper exhortation, the congregation are desired to pray for him in a form prescribed for the purpose.' This having been done, so soon as it could be certified to the bishop that his repentance was believed to be sincere, he might be received back again, 'by a very solemn form,' into the peace of the Church.[1] In England generally the ceremony was in all respects the same,[2] except that no regular form existed for the readmission of penitents. Jones of Alconbury, in the 'Free and Candid Disquisitions' (1749), spoke of the need of a recognised office for this purpose. That which was commonly used had no authority, and was very imperfect. A form also for excommunication was also, he thought, a definite want of the English Church. For want of some such solemnity, excommunication was very deficient in impressiveness, not at all understood by the people in general, and less dreaded than should be, as signifying for the most part nothing more than the loss of a little money.[3]

This might seem a proper place to say something more upon the very remarkable system of Church discipline carried out in the Isle of Man by Bishop Wilson. It was, however, too exceptional in its character, and too restricted by local circumstances and geographical limits, to form any integral part of English Church history in the last century. His work attracted some attention and admiration in England, and though, by the very nature of the case, there was no possibility of its being imitated on the mainland, all Churchmen were proud of a bishop in whom such saintly simplicity was united with such power of government and such extraordinary personal influence. The people, we are told, of the island 'were so thoroughly persuaded of his receiving a large portion of God's blessing, that they seldom began harvest till he did, and if he passed along by the field would leave their work to ask his blessing.'[4] Even when he came to Warrington, his great repute had preceded him, and crowds of people

[1] Hildesley's *History of the Isle of Man*, in Cruttwell's *Life of Wilson*, 371.

[2] Burn's *Eccles. Law*, Art. 'Penance;' Andrews' *Eighteenth Century*, 303.

[3] *Free and Candid Disquis.* 1749, § xviii. [4] Cruttwell's *Wilson*, 228.

flocked round him to beg a blessing from the saintly man. An ardent Churchman, he was nevertheless of a broad and tolerant spirit. Dissenters in the island gladly received the Communion from him; and though he gave them liberty to sit or stand at the receiving of the Sacrament, did not make use of the concession. The Quakers, of whom there were a few, visited, loved, and respected him. Even the Roman Catholics not unfrequently attended his sermons and his prayers. Queen Caroline highly venerated him, and would gladly have given him an English bishopric, if he could have been induced to accept it. 'Cardinal Fleury wanted much to see him, and sent over on purpose to enquire after his health, his age, and the date of his consecration, as they were the two oldest bishops, and he believed the poorest, in Europe; at the same time inviting him to France. The Bishop sent the Cardinal an answer which gave him so high an opinion of him that he obtained an order that no French privateer should ravage the Isle of Man.'[1]

John Newton said, in 1781—only too truly—that the multiplicity of oaths had made perjury a national sin.[2] Now that Church discipline had become almost a fiction, the oaths imposed upon churchwardens and sidesmen were as indefensible as any. 'The duties,' said a writer in 1801, 'to which nevertheless they are most solemnly bound, would require a zeal, a contempt of danger, and a superiority to all worldly considerations which the fervour of the primitive Christians could scarcely have produced. . . . Whoever will take the trouble to examine the articles of enquiry which are presented to them on admission to their office, if he be a man of the world, will smile at the absurdity of exacting the performance of moral impossibilities; if he be a Christian, he will be grieved that oaths should be so profaned as to be treated as mere unmeaning forms.[3] Even at the beginning of the century, we find Dean Prideaux complaining (as indeed many others did) that in parishes where the contrary was most notorious, churchwardens would give in their presentments as if all were right.[4] But as time went on, this remissness in a

[1] Crutwell's *Wilson*, 226.

[2] Sermon of Feb. 21, 1781; J. Newton's *Works*, 827.

[3] *Considerations on the Present State of Religion*, 1801, 42.

[4] In 1705, *Life and Letters of Humphrey Prideaux*, 1747, 100.

duty imposed upon them on oath became too universal to be regarded as a fault at all. When, in 1761, a churchwarden of one of the London parishes published a notice that his oath required him to present, after due admonition, such persons as would not attend public service, and that as an honest man he should feel bound to act in accordance with his oath, his action was looked upon as little more than an amusing eccentricity.[1] There was plenty of authority even in very high places for the demoralising notion that oaths on such and similar cases were practically nothing but empty words. Baron Price, for example, had just been giving a charge to a grand jury, in which he bade them in conformity with their oath present all such as impugned the Church's doctrine of the Trinity. But being informed that Whiston was in court, he told him that what he had said was but a form ; he was reading Whiston's works, and was no judge of heresy.[2] A government cannot be too careful in removing such official oaths as impose duties which have become inexpedient, impracticable, or obsolete.

Before leaving the subject of discipline, a few remarks may be made upon Church opinion in the last century as to the pastoral duty of receiving, in some cases, confessions and pronouncing absolution. It was not, however, a question which attracted much attention during any part of the period. That some of the Nonjurors held views on this point more accordant with the practice of the Roman than of our own Church, is well known. The conduct of Collier and his friends was especially reprobated when, in 1696, they attended on the scaffold the convicted Jacobites, Sir J. Friend and Sir W. Perkins, and pronounced, with laying on of hands, the most solemn form of absolution. A declaration in reproof of it was issued by the archbishops and ten of the bishops.[3] The elder Dodwell's sentiments were quite those of Collier. He wrote one or two treatises on confession and absolution, and is said to have been personally much consulted as a skilful casuist.[4] Robert Nelson was a man far more disposed than were many of his Nonjuring friends to keep

[1] J. P. Malcolm's *Manners of London*, i. 339.
[2] Whiston's *Memoirs*, 1749, 226.
[3] Lathbury's *History of the Nonjurors*, 168.
[4] Brokesby's *Life of Dodwell*, 73, 520.

strictly within the acknowledged constitution of the English Church; but he was quite inclined to advise fuller use than many would think desirable of the recommendation in the exhortation to the Communion. One of his many schemes was to have theological colleges for candidates for holy orders. It should be part of their instruction, he said, 'how to receive clinical confessions,' and lectures should be given, in which 'particular cases of conscience might be clearly stated, and such general rules laid down as might be able to assist them in giving satisfaction to all those that repair to them.'[1] Casuistry has become, in our time, an altogether ill-famed word associated with priestly pretensions and a certain tampering with truth. In the eighteenth century, although not much studied, there appears to have been a less suspicious recognition of it as a science of great importance to all who desire to study or instruct the conscience, and to be sagacious *ductores dubitantium*. Sanderson, in a somewhat earlier age, had owed no little of his repute to his skill in this department of Morals and Pastoral Theology. In the period now before us, Fleetwood is spoken of as one who was 'much consulted in wounds of conscience,' because of 'the fine vein of casuistry' shown in the special talent he possessed of solving difficulties which 'gave disturbance to weak and honest minds.'[2] And of Berriman, who died in 1749, it was observed that 'in solving doubts and directing consciences, he showed his skill in casuistry, notwithstanding the too general neglect in our congregations to afford opportunities of exercising it.'[3] The word is used with a no less perfect freedom from any invidious signification in a treatise upon 'The Qualifications and Duties of a Minister of the Gospel,' published in 1795 by John Napleton, Canon of Hereford and Chaplain to the bishop of that diocese.[4] In general, it may be said of the period under review that in the total absence of any systematic effort to develop anything like a confessional in the English Church, and of any popular disquietude consequent therefrom, there was no disposition either to doubt the ex-

[1] R. Nelson's *Life of Bull*, 16–18, and his Letters in Nichol's *Lit. Anec.* iv. 212.

[2] Fleetwood's *Works*, Pref. viii–ix.

[3] H. B. Wilson's *Hist. of Merchant Taylors*, ii. 1075.

[4] J. Napleton's *Advice to a Student on the Qualif.* &c. 18.

pedience of the advice given in the exhortation of the Communion Service, or to think slightingly of the special qualifications which make a minister of God's word discreet in counselling those who resort to him in such cases. Few more sensible words could be found as to the teaching of the English Church on this subject, than some which occur in Tillotson's 159th sermon.[1] Nor can it be doubted, that in this, as in a multitude of other matters, he both led and represented the opinion of his own and the subsequent age.

There remains one important subject connected with religious worship. It has been remarked by Mr. Jeaffreson, that, in spite of local demonstrations in rural parishes, the English Sunday of the eighteenth century was in most of its social characteristics closely identical with that of the Commonwealth period.[2] The strongly marked division of opinion which had prevailed on this point during the reign of Elizabeth and Charles I. no longer existed. Formerly, Anglicans and Puritans had taken for the most part thoroughly opposite views, and the question had been controverted with much vehemence, and often with much bitterness. Happily for England, the Puritan view, in all its broader and more general features, had won peaceful possession of the ground. The harsher and more rigid observances with which many sectarians had overburdened the holy day, were kept up by some of the denominations, but could not be maintained in the National Church. In fact, their concession was the price of conquest. Anglican divines, and the great and influential body of laymen who were in accord with them, would never have acquiesced in prescriptions and prohibitions which were tenable, if tenable at all, only upon the assumption of a Sabbatarianism which they did not pretend to hold. But the Puritan Sunday, in all its principal characteristics, remained firmly established, and was as warmly supported by High Churchmen as by any who belonged to an opposite party. The writer already referred to has aptly observed that several of Robert Nelson's remarks upon the proper observance of Sunday would have been derided, eighty or a hundred years previously, as Puritanical cant by men

[1] Tillotson's *Works*, vii. 268–70.

[2] J. C. Jeaffreson, *B. of the Clergy*, ii. 139.

whose legitimate successors most warmly applauded what he wrote.[1] No one whose opinion had any authority, desired, after Charles II.'s time, to revive the 'Book of Sports,' or regretted the abolition of Sunday wakes. Amid all the laxity of the Restoration period—amid the partial triumph of Laudean ideas which marked the reign of Queen Anne—amid the indifference and sluggishness in religious matters which soon afterwards set in—reverence for the sanctity of the Lord's Day, and a fixed purpose that its general character of sedate quietness should not be broken into, grew, though it was but gradually, among almost all classes, into a tradition which was respected even by those who had very little care for other ordinances of religion.

Such, undoubtedly, was the predominant feeling of the eighteenth century; and it is difficult to overestimate its value in the support it gave to religion in times when such aid was more than ordinarily needed. Yet amid this general agreement there was a very considerable diversity of opinion. It was a point on which Churchmen were sometimes taunted for their want of unanimity. The strict Sabbatarianism which had taken root in Scotland, and which, even at the time of the American outbreak, was retained with almost undiminished force in parts of New England,[2] was not very popular in this country. Most Dissenters—not excepting those who, like Doddridge, were on many points in close sympathy with English Churchmen—commonly spoke of Sunday as the Sabbath.[3] Yet they did not, as a rule, hold the austere views of the stiffer Puritans. Nor could there be a much stronger or (as might be thought) a more obvious protest against that opinion, than one very unintentionally made by those among the Baptists who maintained the observance of the Saturday Sabbath.[4] Still, not among Nonconformists only, but also in the National Church, there were many who were very strict Sabbatarians. The opinion, however, of the mass of the people was formed, in a manner

[1] J. C. Jeaffreson, *B. of the Clergy*, ii. 140.

[2] Lord Mahon's *Hist. of England*, chap. 43.

[3] 'It is Sabbath night, and yet I could not omit writing.'—*Corresp. and Diary of Ph. Doddridge*, iii. 57. Caleb Fleming, a Baptist of Unitarian views, wrote against the perpetual obligation of the Sabbath.—J. Hunt's *Rel. Thought in Engl.* iii. 249.

[4] Whiston's *Memoirs*, ii. 471.

thoroughly characteristic of the English mind, by a sort of compromise between the two modes of regarding the day. They heard the Fourth Commandment read in Church, and learnt it in the Catechism, and drew no particular distinction between it and the rest of the Decalogue. They did not dispute the general identity of the Jewish and the Christian day of rest. This idea preponderated. But none the less it was made to fit in with different memories of a weekly festival of the Christian Church. Until some of the leaders in the Wesleyan and Evangelical movements gave a fresh impulse to decided Sabbatarian opinion, there was no section of English Churchmen among whom the day of rest was commonly called by its Jewish name.

The majority of Church writers—at all events for the first fifty or sixty years of the century—were distinctly non-Sabbatarians. Robert Nelson's words so exactly expressed the ordinary opinion of devout Churchmen on the subject that they may be quoted: 'Q. In what sense may the Lord's day be called the Sabbath? A. In that we rest on that day from the works of our ordinary callings, and dedicate it to the service of God, whose service is perfect freedom. But by Scripture, antiquity, and all ecclesiastical writers, it is constantly appropriated to Saturday, the day of the Jews' Sabbath, and but of late years used to signify the Lord's day. So that though the charge of Judaism, upon those that use it in a Christian sense, appears too severe, yet upon many respects it might be expedient but sparingly to distinguish the day of the Christian worship by the name of the Sabbath.'[1] In the seventeenth century, Chillingworth, 'the Champion of Protestantism,' as he was often called, had been unable for some time to subscribe on two grounds—one being the damnatory sentences in the Athanasian Creed; the other, the position of the Fourth Commandment in the Communion Service. He was not sure whether the prayer that follows it did not stamp it as being, in the opinion of the English Church, a law of God, appertaining to Christians; and this he thought was false and unlawful.[2] There was something of the same feeling with most leading Churchmen during the first half of the period

[1] R. Nelson's *Festivals and Fasts*, 'The Lord's Day.'

[2] Chillingworth to Sheldon, quoted in Whiston's *Hist. Mem. of S. Clarke*, ed. 1748, 94.

before us. But it was overruled in them, as it had been with Chillingworth, by the thought that the extreme importance of hallowing the holy day, and the analogy which subsisted on this point between the Jewish and the Christian law, might fairly sanction a Christian use of the Mosaical Commandment.

To the words of Robert Nelson, as already quoted, may be added those of two other very different, but also very representative men—Fleetwood, one of the Whig bishops; and Secker, the model of all that was reputed correct and orthodox in the middle of the century. 'I am not, I must own,' writes the former, 'for pressing a precise and rigorous observation of this day, nor for filling people's heads with false and Jewish notions of its sanctification.'[1] No ordinary engagement, said the latter, ought to stand in the way of attendance at evening, as well as at morning service, on Sundays; 'and amusements ought surely never to be preferred on the Lord's day before religion; not to say that there is room for both. . . . Though one would not by any means make the day of rest wearisome, nor forbid cheerfulness, and even innocent festivity, upon it, much less the expression of neighbourly civility and good will, which are indeed a valuable part of the institution, yet a due part of the Sabbath should be spent in private exercises of piety.'[2]

An illustration, which may be worth quoting, of the general respect felt for a due and tranquil observance of the Lord's day, occurs in the 'Life of Lord Chancellor Harcourt.' Travelling one Sunday, about 1710, in time of Divine service, through Abingdon, he was stopped, with many humble apologies, by the constables. The Chancellor acknowledged they were doing their duty; and, to the gratification of the officers, ordered his coach to the church door, and attended the service to the end.[3]

The general fact that public opinion continued almost everywhere to approve that staid observance of the Lord's day, which was one of the happiest results of the Commonwealth period, is not invalidated by a great many exceptions

[1] Fleetwood's Charge of 1710, 472.

[2] Secker's Charge of 1741, *Eight Charges*, 75.

[3] Campbell's *Lives of the Chancellors*, iv. 499.

which might tend to a contrary conclusion. Many passages could be quoted, from which it might be inferred, with some show of reason, that a profane non-observance of the holy day was almost the general rule. But there was some unconscious exaggeration in this, as in other analogous self-accusations. The present age is rather too apt to glorify itself. The last was wont to dwell with some excess of disparagement upon its own shortcomings. Though the deeper springs of spiritual feeling ran feebly, there was a vast abundance of didactic thought, and, in most classes, a quicker perception than there has often been of offences against the moral law. And among these offences it was certainly inclined to rank disregard of the proprieties of the Sunday.

In the Court and among the highest ranks of society there was certainly, during the earlier part of the period, very little idea of the Sunday having inherited the obligations of the ancient Sabbath. Such an opinion was entirely alien to the religious traditions of the Jacobean dynasty. William III. came from a land where (as Thoresby expressed it) the 'unhappy principle prevailed of the Lord's day being no divine institution;'[1] the Lutheran Church, in which George I. had been brought up, had adopted the ordinary Continental observance of the day. Court influence, therefore, for some time ran quite counter to the Puritan sentiment. Queen Anne, although a most earnest Churchwoman, and very careful in her observance of the ordinances of religion, always held a Cabinet Council on Sunday evenings, followed by an audience on State business with her Lord Chancellor.[2] Voltaire, in his visit to England in George I.'s reign, evidently thought the highest classes were more emancipated than others from what he looked upon as a mere strait-laced superstition. Among others, he said, in disgust, even cards were almost everywhere prohibited on Sundays. Of course in many cases this disregard of what was generally thought right, was simply indifference or irreligion. But very often, especially

[1] Thoresby's *Correspondence*, June 29, 1682, i. 16.

[2] Lord Campbell's *Lives of the Lord Chancellors*, iv. 294.

[3] Quoted in H. A. Taine's *Hist. de la Litt. Angl.*, iii. 27. 'But there was a good deal of Sunday card playing among people of all ages and classes. *True Briton*, Jan. 28, 1746, quoted in Andrew's *Eighteenth Cent.* 127, *Adventurer*, Nos. 23 and 71; Nichol's *Lit. Anecd.* i. 698.

in the earlier part of the century, it was the remains of another mode of thought which only a few generations earlier had been almost as general in England as it is now abroad. Even in 1686, John Scott, the pious author of 'Christian Perfection,' was certainly not thinking of persons who had little or no care for religion, when, speaking of the blessedness of the Lord's day, he adds, 'Especially, if when the public services are over, we would not let loose ourselves all the rest of the day, as we too frequently do, to our secular cares and diversions.' [1]

It is difficult, therefore, to say how far, during the first half of the period, Sunday diversions—such as evening entertainments and card-playing among the upper classes, jaunts to the suburbs among citizens, boxing or wrestling matches in country villages [2]—were more or less what would be called 'Sabbath breaking,' or traces of customs once considered everywhere legitimate, but fast giving way before the later and better tradition which was mainly due to Puritan influence. Later in the century there is no longer much doubt on this point. Owing in part to the direct or indirect operations of the Methodist and Evangelical movements, and in part to alarm at what seemed a growing inclination among the careless to make Sunday a mere day of pleasure, feeling among serious and religious people became now far more unanimous in favour of the stricter view.[3] In 1781 the question was fairly fought out on the floor of the House of Commons. During the preceding winter, two new modes of Sunday entertainment had been set on foot in London. One was a public promenade, to which people were admitted by payment of three shillings, and which soon attained a bad notoriety on account of the dissolute company that was to

[1] J. Scott's *Christian Life*, &c., 193.

[2] Or even bull and bear baiting, both of which had been forbidden on Sundays in the 'Book of Sports.'—Bishop Newton's *Autobiogr.* 220.

[3] Wesley's 'Life of J. Fletcher,' 1786, *Works*, vol. xi. 335. Wesley *Against Sunday Excursions*, xi. 166. *Life of Dean Graves*, by his Son, 1840, i. xlvi. Bishop Hurd's *Works*, viii. 11. *Gentleman's Mag.*, 1784, p. 20, and 1799, p. 580. Horsley quoted in *Q. Rev.*, 9, 35. *Report from the Clergy of the Diocese of Lincoln*, 1800, 7. Porteus's *Letter to the Clergy on the Profanation of the Lord's Day. Works*, R. Hodgson, vi. 225. Nichols' *Lit. Anecd.* iii. 434. H. More's *Memoirs*, i. 179, 478, &c. 'Thoughts on the Manners of the Great,' *Works*, xi. 26–33.

be met there. The other was a popular debating club, in rooms hired for the purpose. There, and in other places of the same kind, passages of Scripture were proposed, and people present, both gentlemen and ladies, were invited to get up and bring forward any doubts or difficulties they might feel, and make any remarks which they might choose.[1] It was said that these societies, which had been started in the first instance as commercial speculations, were apt to become mere schools of impiety. Bishop Porteus, assisted a good deal by Bishop Barrington, took the foremost place in the effort to put a stop to these innovations by a legislative Act. The Bill was approved by Lord Bathurst, Lord Chancellor Thurlow, and Lord Mansfield, and was moved in the House of Commons by the Solicitor-General, seconded by Sir William Volden. It met with some vehement opposition,[2] but passed without a division in the Lower House, and by a majority of twenty-six in the House of Lords. Henceforth no place could be lawfully used for public entertainment or public debate on the Lord's day, where people were admitted by the payment of money.

There was no one who hated irreligion more cordially than George III. But it may be noticed that neither he nor worthy Queen Charlotte could ever see any objection to a practice which greatly annoyed many of the stricter among his subjects. 'The music on the terrace on Sundays,' Sir James Stonehouse wrote to Hannah More, 'is pregnant with evil from Windsor to London; it infects all the neighbourhood ten miles round Windsor; and oh! what an irreligious example to the youths of Eton!'[3] Bishop Porteus implored the King to discontinue the Sunday bands at Windsor, Kensington, and Weymouth, but only succeeded in making him very angry.[4] Although George III. was quite in sympathy with Evangelical Churchmen on many points, he was not at all at one with them in this; and the Queen, always a Lutheran in heart, naturally saw no evil in customs which had been familiar to her from her childhood.

[1] Porteus's 'Life,' by his Son—*Works*, i. 71–4.

[2] *Life of Bishop Horne*, by Jones of Nayland, 131. H. Walpole, *Journal of the Reign of George III.* (Doran), ii. 463.

[3] *Memoirs of H. More*, i. 478.

[4] *Q. Rev.* vol. 105, 498.

There are other subjects which, by a slight enlargement of the range of this chapter, might not improperly have been included in it. Among these there are two of much importance. One relates to the efforts made by Churchmen to promote Christian education among the people, especially in the Charity Schools which made such rapid growth at the beginning of the century, and in the Sunday Schools which were springing up everywhere towards its close. But this subject is too large to be discussed in a few paragraphs; the more so, as it should embrace some remarks on the higher education in public schools, and at the Universities. The other is the growth and development of Religious Societies. Here, again, interest is chiefly concentrated on the beginning and the end of the period. It must be acknowledged, to the discredit of the National Church, that, apart from Methodism, the middle of the century bears, in almost every department of organised Christian work, far too much (at all events at first sight), the appearance of a barren waste. Nevertheless there was no time when the great Church Societies were idle; no time when their reports could not show a very considerable amount of useful work. In fact, Christian philanthropy, exhibited in these as in a great variety of other forms, was by no means inactive throughout the last century. But what was said of religious education must be said also of the Church Societies. It is too large a topic to be treated in such detail as would do it reasonable justice, except in a separate form. There are several aspects of Church life in relation to the social history of the period which the authors of these chapters are well aware they have either omitted entirely, or have very insufficiently touched upon. It is not that they have undervalued their interest as compared with matters which have been more fully discussed, but simply that the plan of their work almost precluded the attempt at anything like complete treatment of the whole of a subject which may be viewed from many sides.

C. J. A.

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